



DSPL-79



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## Felicitation Ceremony of The Heroes of Indian Hockey

Chief Guest

**Sri Mohan Charan Majhi**

Hon'ble Chief Minister, Odisha

Convention Centre, Loka Seva Bhavan

5:00 P.M., 21 August 2024

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# Double whammy: After potato, onion price soars in State

Short supply from Nashik has shot price of onion to Rs 50 a kg

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

Even as the consumers are yet to get a respite from the soaring potato price in Odisha, the sudden price rise of onion has created further headache for them.

The onion, which was sold at Rs 35 to Rs 40 a week back, now is sold at Rs 50 at several markets in the State. The price of the essential commodity has surged by Rs 10 in the retail market in the last couple of days.

As per the traders, the price



of onion has increased due to the short supply from Nashik. According to them, price of the essential kitchen item may witness a further increase in the upcoming days.

"The price of onion has increased due to short supply from Nashik. Supply has been affected due to the ongoing rainy season. We have a stock of onions only for three days

in Odisha. If the amount of supply doesn't increase, the price of onion will rise further in coming days," said a trader in Bhubaneswar.

The price rise of essential kitchen items has severely affected the budget of the common man.

"After an increase in the price of potato, the price of onion has surged to Rs 50. The price rise of essential kitchen items has pinched our pockets. Our budget has been destabilized. We are now helpless on how to deal with the highly inflationary market," said a consumer in Bhubaneswar. Meanwhile, the potato is available at Rs 40 at several markets in Odisha.

# 'Increase investments, expedite schemes'



## CM asks departmental Secretaries

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi in a meeting here on Tuesday directed all departmental Secretaries to

expedite all developmental activities and increase allocations for different schemes.

Besides, Majhi directed for increase in investments to expedite growth. By increasing growth, more employment opportunities can be created, he said. The different departments, particularly those in

charge of construction of infrastructure, if needed, should recruit more technical manpower and expedite the different schemes, he said.

As the State Government is working with a big vision in mind for the years 2036 and 2047, there is a need for work to be in a coordinated man-

ner with team spirit, he added.

Finance Secretary Saswat Mishra presented comparative income and expenditure for April to July for 2023-24 and 2024-25. Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja, Chief Minister's Principal Secretary Nikunjia Bihari Dhal and other senior officials were present.

# In city Man has heart attack at petrol pump, dies

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

A man died in an unpredictable manner at a petrol pump in Bhubaneswar on Tuesday.

As per reports, the man put petrol in his bike at the outlet in Chandrasekharpur. However, while starting his bike, he fell down and became unconscious.

Employees of the petrol pump took him aside and gave him some primary treatment. A journalist, who was present there, also tried his best to save the life of the person by providing Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) treatment by pumping his chest.

Following the CPR treatment, the person responded well. Subsequently, he was carried to the Capital Hospital through a PCR van. However, he died while undergoing treatment.

What is Cardiopulmonary



Resuscitation?

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation or CPR is used in an emergency if someone is not breathing normally, or their heart has stopped (cardiac arrest).

CPR helps keep the blood circulating and delivers Oxygen to the body until specialist treatment is available.

There is usually enough Oxygen still in the blood to keep the brain and other organs alive, supported for a few minutes, but someone needs to give CPR for its circulation in the body.

## OHRC direction

TPWODL asked to pay Rs 8L to burn victim's kin

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

The Odisha Human Rights Commission (OHRC) has asked the TP Western Odisha Distribution Limited (TPWODL) to pay a compensation of Rs 8 lakh to a nine-year-old in Kalahandi who suffered severe burn injuries after coming in contact with a 33-KV power line.

The victim has been identified as Tigar Khamari from Bagad village.

As per a published report, the OHRC found prima facie negligence on the part of TPWODL leading to the accident.

In its order on August 13, 2024, Justice S Pujahari directed the TPWODL to pay the compensation within one

month. The order stated that Rs 4 lakh has already been paid to Tigar's father Sanjaya Khamari.

However, the OHRC said the TPWODL retains the right to take action against the house owner if the house was built in violation of TPWODL regulations.

The commission further added that the recommended amount does not account for the full extent of the victim's expenses or disabilities, allowing for further claims in the appropriate forum.

Notably, while playing on the roof of a house, Tigar came in contact with the high-voltage line on November 19, 2022. The house owner alleged that despite requests, the power line had not been relocated.

# BJP aims to enroll 1 cr members in State

To launch drive on Sept 1

**NALINI SAHU ■ BHUBANESWAR**

The BJP, which came to power in Odisha a couple of months ago ending 24 years of rule of the Naveen Patnaik-led BJD, has decided to launch a new membership drive in the State on September 1 to enroll at least one crore members.

The party has prepared a blueprint for multiple special workshops at State, district, mandal and booth levels to make the campaign a success.

A State-level workshop was held at the party headquarters

in Bhubaneswar on Tuesday being attended by the MPs, MLAs, office-bearers and district presidents of the party.

After this, a special training session will be held on August 22, 23 and 24 at the district level. Workshops will be held at mandal (circle) level on August 25, 26 and 27 and at the block level by August 31.

BJP State president Manmohan Samal said people above 18 years of age, following and supporting BJP's ideology, would be made members of the party. The BJP claims to have over 18 crore members across India, which makes it the world's largest political party.

# Olympian Indian Men's Hockey squad to be feted today

By CM Majhi

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi will felicitate Indian Hockey team, which won a bronze at the recently concluded Paris Olympics 2024, at the Lok Seva Bhavan's convention centre here on Wednesday.

Addressing mediapersons, Sports Minister Suryabanshi Suraj said a grand welcome is being planned for the Olympics heroes. "The team will arrive in Odisha tomorrow and hold a roadshow from Biju Patnaik International Airport to Kalinga Stadium. Thereafter, the team will be felicitated by the CM," he said.

He said that the hockey team has made India proud by winning the second consecutive Olympic medal and added that the victory has inspired millions of young athletes.



The Indian men's hockey team came from a goal down to beat Spain 2-1 and won the bronze medal at the Paris Olympics. They gave a befitting farewell to veteran goalkeeper PR Sreejesh, who was playing his last International match.

The Minister further said that Odisha has been working for development of sports and

hockey and all-round development of sportsmen and the journey will continue.

Odisha has played a crucial role in the resurgence of Indian hockey since stepping in as the official sponsor of the Indian men's and women's hockey teams in 2018 when the sport struggled financially following Sahara's exit as the primary sponsor. The Naveen Patnaik-

led BJD Government committed a significant investment in hockey with a deal worth Rs 120 crore that was later extended by another ten years, ensuring continued support until 2033. The sponsorship was further extended to 2036 by the Mohan Majhi Government, which took charge in June, underlining the State's long-term commitment to the sport.

## After Kolkata horror

# MKCG lady docs express concern over safety

**PNS ■ BRAHMAMPUR**

While the brutal rape and murder of a trainee doctor at RG Kar Hospital in Kolkata has triggered nationwide outrage, questions are now being raised on the safety and security of medics serving the patients late at night at various hospitals across the country.

As doctors across the country continue their protests demanding justice for the victim and demanding safety and security for the health workers, a reality check about the prevailing working conditions for the doctors at the MKCG Medical College Hospital in Brahmampur was conducted at midnight on Monday.

The lady doctors on night duty expressed concern about their safety and security.

Not a single security guard



was reportedly found on the way to the casualty department where some female doctors were doing their duty on the night shift. "We are working at the hospital throughout the night. We need proper security and safety measures. We are coming and going to our hostel at night. Hence, we need

a secure environment to work. Now, all the elective services have been stopped due to the ongoing strike. However, all the emergency services are provided at the hospital so that the patients are not affected," said a lady doctor on night shift.

"We work on night duty till morning. Following the hei-

nous act in Kolkata, our parents are getting tense. It is the responsibility of the administration to provide us safety and security. CCTV cameras should be installed in the corridors and proper security should be provided to the doctors during their duty hours," said another lady doctor.

## Milestone for Khurda Rd-B'nglr rly line

# 16.27km Jharmunda-Boudh section commissioned

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

The Khurda Road-Balangir Rail Link Project (301 km) achieved another milestone on Sunday with the completion and commissioning of Jharmunda-Boudh Railway Section (16.27 km).

Engine rolling on the new line was completed successfully on the day. Apart from this, a 29.75 km stretch rail section, Sonapur-Purunapani-Jharmunda, was also inspected by the Commissioner, Railway Safety a few days back, sources said.

Out of the total 301 km Khurda Road-Balangir project,



183 km of rail line has been commissioned. The Railways has been constructing the line from both sides, i.e., from Khurda Road and from Balangir, to ensure early completion of the project, the officials of East Coast Railway (ECOR) said.

Till now, 106 km from Khurda Road to Daspalla and 77 km from Balangir to Jharmunda have been commissioned. Apart from this, Jharmunda to Boudh, a distance of 16.27 km, has also been completed.

The segment from Boudh to Purunakatak, covering about 27 km, is expected to be

completed within the next few months.

Sonepur-Purunapani-Jharmunda Rail Section involves one important bridge, seven major bridges, four Road Over Bridges (ROBs), 22 Road Under Bridges (RUBs)/Limited Height Subways (LHS) and 65 minor bridges.

Besides, the Jharmunda-Boudh Section comprises six major bridges, one ROB, 12 RUB/LHSs and 37 minor bridges along with 16.05 lakh cum of earthwork. Thus, Boudh district headquarters is now connected to the western Odisha through railway network.

## RBI conducts financial literacy event



**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

A Field-Level Financial Literacy Event (FLFLE) was organised by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in Puri district on Tuesday with RBI Deputy General Manager Madhukar Anand, along with other officers, inaugurating the event.

Anand highlighted the 90th anniversary of RBI and various activities planned to be conducted to commemorate it. He stressed on the need for financial literacy and awareness and the steps taken by RBI in this regard. Participants from various target groups, viz., students, SHG women, farmers, entrepreneurs and senior citizens attended the programme.

The RBI officials took sessions covering various topics

such as financial planning, savings and responsible borrowing, investment, insurance including social security schemes, pension, Vidya Lakshmi portal for education loans, etc. The participants were also made aware about fake note detection, note exchange facilities by banks and coin as legal tenders.

Further, modus operandi of various frauds including cybercriminals were explained with real life examples. The participants were sensitised not to share the financial information with anyone over phone.

In the end, the Grievance Redressal Mechanism of RBI and procedure for lodging complaints were also informed to the participants. Several queries from the participants were clarified.

## SBI Officers' Assn foundation day



**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

The State Bank of India Officers' Association (SBOA), Bhubaneswar Circle Celebrated its 47th Foundation Day here on Monday. A series of philanthropic activities were undertaken on the occasion.

The celebrations kicked off with the distribution of 130 backpacks to students of the Bhima Bhoi Blind School,

Bhubaneswar. The school's headmistress and teachers ensured the event's success.

Association general secretary Arun Kumar Bishoyi encouraged the children to look beyond their limitations and strive for greatness. SBOA members also organised a food drive programme at 'Ashraay', a destitute home. Around 70 elderly and destitute residents were served lunch and dinner.





**OPINION 6**  
ANOTHER SURPRISE REGIME  
CHANGE IN NEIGHBOURHOOD

**WORLD 8**  
ISRAEL RECOVERS BODIES OF 6  
HOSTAGES FROM GAZA

**MONEY 10**  
SENSEX REBOUNDS  
370 POINTS

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# SUPREME COURT HOLDS WOMEN SUPREME

**Medical fraternity safety prime**

**HC rapped for sexist comments**

RAJESH KUMAR ■ 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. 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. A Bench of Chief Justice of India (CJI) DY Chandrachud, Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra was hearing matters related to the incident after it took suo motu cognisance of the incident, which has triggered a nationwide strike by doctors and other health workers. The SC passed the order saying



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 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

professionals; and providing an enforceable national protocol for dignified and safe working conditions for interns, residents, senior residents, doctors, nurses and all medical professionals. "The NTF shall be at liberty to make recommendations on all aspects of the action-plan highlighted above and any other aspects which the members seek to cover. They are at liberty to make additional suggestions, where appropriate.

"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 ■ 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 ■ 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.

## SIM box racket: Another setup unearthed in J'khand

Police to seek NIA, Interpol help to nab handler  
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR  
After busting the SIM box set rackets in the twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack, the Commissionerate police on Tuesday detected another setup in Ranchi in Jharkhand. The SIM box setup was busted at Maulana Azad Colony after a raid was conducted with the help of the Jharkhand Police. Five active devices and multiple SIM cards were seized during the raids. The house owner was being interrogated in connection with the incident. Sources said the mastermind from Bangladesh had also visited the place in Ranchi like he visited Bhubaneswar. The SIM box setup in Ranchi was busted based on the information revealed by arrested accused Raju Mandal. The Commissionerate po-

lice have sought assistance from the National Investigation Agency (NIA) and the Interpol as the mastermind and the handler of the accused Raju is said to be an associate of Asadur Jaman who is a native of Bangladesh. Like Bhubaneswar Asadur had also visited Ranchi to oversee setting up of the SIM box. The terror link and other aspects including cyber fraud would be probed, police said. After the seizure of SIM box devices, a detailed technical

examination would be conducted in this connection. Sources said a team of Commissionerate police would soon conduct a similar raid in another State, where a SIM box has been set up. Earlier, the Commissionerate police seized a total of 12 SIM boxes during the raids in Cuttack and Bhubaneswar. Apart from this, a total of 481 SIM cards and an extra 810 standby SIM cards were also seized from both places.

## Rains, thunderstorms to continue in State

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR  
Even as thundershowers lashed the capital city on Tuesday afternoon, the State would witness rain and thunderstorms in the coming days as well under influence of a low pressure, said the India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Tuesday. The low-pressure area over south Bangladesh and the

neighbourhood now lies over central parts of Bangladesh and neighbourhood, said the IMD. On Wednesday, heavy rainfall (7 to 11 cm) and thunderstorm with lightning are very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, Deogarh, Angul, Dhenkanal, Cuttack,

Nabarangpur, Koraput, Kalahandi, Rayagada, Gajapati, Baleswar, Bargarh and Nuapada, said the Regional Office of the IMD here issuing a Yellow warning. On Thursday, heavy rainfall (7 to 11 cm) and thunderstorm with lightning are very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Sundargarh, Bargarh, Nuapada, Balangir, Subarnapur, Nabarangpur, Kalahandi, Koraput, Rayagada and Gajapati. Deogarh, said the weather office issuing a Yellow warning. On Friday, heavy rainfall (7 to 11 cm) and thunderstorm with lightning are very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Sundargarh, Bargarh, Nuapada, Balangir, Subarnapur, Nabarangpur, Kalahandi, Koraput, Rayagada and Gajapati.

## Mamata BJP RS candidate



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR  
The popular tribal leader of the Kudumi community was the first choice of the BJP for the Upper House. The Rajya Sabha by-election will be held on September 3. Even though several other names, including that of party State president Manmohan Samal, were doing rounds, the BJP picked Mamata and announced her as its candidate for the Rajya Sabha elections.

## Assembly adjourned amid Opp uproar

- Cong demands Students' Union polls
- BJD raises Governor's son incident

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR  
The Odisha Assembly, which met on Tuesday after a 19-day break for second phase of the State Budget, witnessed uproar over the issues of Students' Union elections and the alleged assault by the State Governor's son on an officer. The House was adjourned until 4 pm by Speaker Surama Padhy after opposition Congress and BJD MLAs disrupted proceedings over the two is-



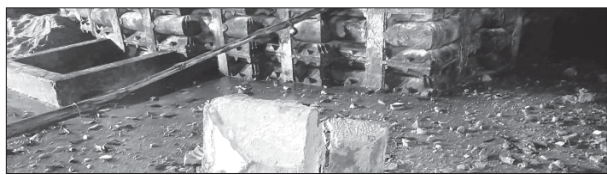
sues, each with their own demands. The session opened with an obituary motion to honour former Jashipur MLA Sundar Mohan Majhi. Then, the Speaker moved on to the Question Hour, asking Panchayati Raj Minister Rabi Nayak to respond. However, Congress members stormed into the Well of the House, demanding resumption of Students' Union elections in educational institu-

government's actions against the Governor's son and called for removal of a remark made by Parliamentary Affairs Minister Mukesh Mahaling about arresting Leader of the Opposition Naveen Patnaik from the House records. She also sought clarifications on the privilege notice moved against Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi for announcing reservations for Agniveers from Odisha in the State's uniformed services outside the Assembly when the House was in session. As the chaos continued on both sides, the Speaker adjourned the House at 10:41 am for an hour until 11:41 am. However, when the House reconvened, the situation remained unchanged. Congress members once again rushed into the Well reiterating their demand for Students' Union elections. Despite the efforts of Parliamentary Affairs Minister Mukesh Mahaling to present the Cabinet decisions, the din made it impossible for his words to be heard. With no resolution in sight, the Speaker adjourned the House again until 4 pm, resulting in the loss of the Question Hour, Zero Hour and Adjournment Motions, with no business being transacted.



# In Kendrapada Struck by lightning, stones fall off 156-yr-old temple

Locals demand immediate steps in its conservation  
**RAJESH BEHERA**  
KENDRAPADA



According to member of Binod Bihari Jew temple managing committee Umakanta Singh while the bhajan and kirtan was going on Monday evening, lightning struck at the dadi nauti of the temple, resulting in a stone, weighing of around a quintal, rolling from atop which later damaged the temple structure. As many as 12 stones fell off the

temple subsequently. The Binod Bihari Jew temple is an important monument of the district known for its architectural designs and delicate carvings. According to an inscription placed in the temple precincts, the shrine was established by Sri Ram Govind Jagaddev in 1868 AD under the supervision of Sri Gopaladas Babajee. The presid-

ing deity of the temple is Sri Krishna and his consort Sri Radha. The images are made of black chlorite stone. Festivals like Nanda Utsav, Giri Govardhan Puja etc. associated with the life and activities of Sri Krishna are observed here with pomp and ceremony. The temple was built in pidha style. The locals demanded before the District Tourist Officer and the district Collector to take steps for requesting the ASI (Archaeology Survey of India) for the repair and maintenance of the temple.

# Minor girl missing for 5 months in B'swar

Parents allege police inaction, seek govt help  
**PNS** ■ BALESWAR

The parents of a minor girl, who is missing for the last five months in Baleswar district, are running from pillar to post to trace the whereabouts of their daughter. The victim of village Analadiha under the Baliapal police station in the district has been missing from March 2024. The father of the girl

lodged a complaint with the Baliapal police station on March 9 alleging that she was kidnapped by a man along with some of his associates. The complainant stated that he along with his family member made frantic searches to locate their daughter but in vain. The police inaction in the case has made the family lose all hope. He sought the State Government's intervention in the matter fearing that their daughter might be taken outside the State.

## INBRIEF

**Voss-92 members felicitate Law Minister**  
Bhubaneswar: Voss-92 members felicitated Law Minister and former student of Utkal University Prithviraj Harichandan on



Monday at his residence and discussed about the developmental activities of the Utkal University. Voss-92 office-bearers Gadadhar Rath, Bibekanand Sahu, Bimbadhar Sethi, Manoj Deo, Ramesh Sahu and Manoj Rout were present during the occasion.

**International award for Sunakar Behera**  
Paradip: Social activist from Rahama, Jagatsinghpur, and State secretary of All India Consumers Welfare Council (AICWC) advocate Dr Sunakar Behera has been awarded International Humanitarian Award-2024 for his contributions for creating social awareness, cultural promotion and economic development for peoples from different spheres. Dr Behera is nominated to address the National Conference of AICWC in Chandigarh on August 24 wherein he will present his charter on consumer welfare.



**RI, Amin held taking bribe in Sundargarh**  
Cuttack: Revenue Inspector (RI) Tulasa Pradhan and Amin Mukesh Sahu were apprehended by the Vigilance police at Kesheibahal in Sambalpur district on Tuesday while accepting a bribe of Rs 7,000 from a person. They had demanded the bribe from a person to make a field inquiry in a land matter. The RI was nabbed along with the Amin while accepting the bribe of Rs 7,000 as final installment of the overall demand of Rs 10,000 from the complainant person. Following the trap, simultaneous searches were conducted at two locations of each accused from the disproportionate angle.

**Cameraman Pradhan passes away in Phulbani**  
Phulbani: Popular media cameraman Dukhishyam Pradhan passed away here on Monday. He was 50. He had returned to Kandhamal recently after getting treated at the AIIMS Bhubaneswar. He was known for his amicable and down-to-earth behaviour. Senior journalist Arup Jena, Press Club president Sunil Patnaik, secretary Birendra Subudhi, joint secretary Jaisen Parida, Trinath Sahu, Ajith Maharana, Sujith Behera and many others have expressed deep grief over the demise of Pradhan and expressed their sympathies to the bereaved family.



# 9-yr-old diarrhoea-hit dies in K'pada DHH

Father alleges negligence in treatment by docs  
**PNS** ■ KENDRAPADA  
A nine-year-old boy suffering from diarrhoea died on Sunday at the District Headquarters Hospital, Kendrapada, allegedly due to medical negligence as the doctor and nurse did not attend the minor boy properly. The deceased has been identified as Abhiram Behera, son of Gajendra Behera of Charipokharia under Bhitargada of Rajnagar block. He was first admitted at the Rajnagar CHC for treatment. However, as his health condition deteriorated, he was referred to the DHH. He was admitted at the diarrhoea ward situated in fourth floor of the hospital building and provided treatment as per the prescription of the Rajnagar CHC. "At about 3 pm on Sunday, when my son felt uneasiness as he developed pain and body aches on his body, I rushed to the doctor and staff, who were on duty, to come near my son. But to my son's ill-luck, neither the doctor nor the nurse came to attend my son. As a result, my son died without getting necessary treatment," alleged Gajendra, the father of the deceased. Meanwhile, Gajendra filed a complaint before the ADMO of Kendrapada urging him to conduct an inquiry and take stern action against the doctor and nurse, who neglected the child. He also warned of holding demonstration in front of the DHH in coming days.

# In Sundargarh 2 minor girls trafficked to Rajasthan rescued

6 accused arrested  
**PNS** ■ SUNDARGARH  
The Kutra police in Sundargarh district on Tuesday busted a racket allegedly involved in trafficking women from the Kutra area to Rajasthan. While two minor girls were rescued from Rajasthan, as many as six persons including two from Rajasthan were arrested in this connection. As per reports, minor girls from poor families in Kutra area were lured on the pretext of jobs and sold in Rajasthan. A girl went missing in October 2023. While Kutra police was carrying out an investigation into the incident, the girl called home some days before and asked her family to rescue her. After receiving the call, the family lodged a complaint with the police. Subsequently, a team led by Rajgangpur SDPO Abhisek Panigrahi was formed. The team traced the mobile call during the investigation and rescued the victim from Rajasthan. Another minor girl was also rescued along with her. Two persons involved in the racket were arrested in Rajasthan. Subsequently, four others from Rourkela were also held. Further investigation about the racket was ongoing. "The minor girls were sold in the price range between Rs 2 to Rs 3 lakh. The girls were physically and mentally tortured by the agents. Further investigation into the incident is currently underway," the SDPO said.

# At Bangurigaon CHC Patient dies as doc attends to him late

**KAMAL LOCHAN DIXIT** ■ KAKATPUR  
Due to alleged negligence in treatment at Bangurigaon community health center (CHC) under Kakatpur block, a patient died. Following the incident, tension mounted in the hospital as the relatives of the deceased created a ruckus. After getting the news, the Kakatpur police reached at the spot and tried to pacify the aggrieved people. According to information, Pramod Mallik (55) of Jaleswarpada Panchayat's Pateligaon village was admitted to the CHC on Sunday afternoon at 4.30 pm due to breathing problems. However, during the admission of the patient, there was no doctor in the CHC. The doctor arrived too late and by that time, the patient's condition had turned serious. According to Pramod's wife Bhanu Mallik, by the time the doctor arrived, the patient had lost consciousness. The doctor gave an injection, but by then it was too late. As a result, Pramod died. The relatives of the patient, complaining of medical negligence, rushed to the hospital and created a scene. Notably, a special team on the orders of the State Government had investigated the death of a woman in the nearby Ganipur village due to a wrong injection given to her in the same CHC less than a month ago. Since an inexperienced young doctor has been appointed at the CHC, the treatment being offered is not satisfactory, alleged many locals who also demanded the replacement of the doctor by an experienced one.



# Baripada College observes Foundation Day

**PNS** ■ BARIAPADA  
The Baripada Higher Secondary School, established here at Bhanjpur more than four decades ago, observed its 43rd Foundation Day on Saturday. The glittering function was presided over by the college Principal Rajesh Sarangi, while former Jharkhand Health and Family Welfare Minister and Singhbhum's prominent Odia leader Dr Dinesh Sarangi was the chief guest. Environmentalist and journalist Dr Bijay Kumar Agarwalla was the guest of honour and poet and writer Kavi Vishnu Satpathy was the chief speaker on the occasion. The speakers spoke on the importance of true education and character-building. They also reminded the student community of the glorious past of Mayurbhanj, Odisha and India. Along with the guests, three tribal girl students of the college, namely Amisha Rani Majhi, Bhagyaxmi Marandi and Hishi Tudu, were felicitated on the occasion for their praiseworthy performance in sports at the national level. While college Administrative Officer Dr Subrat Patra delivered the welcome speech at the outset, Botany Lecturer Smita Das offered the vote of thanks at the end. Lecturers Dr Anjali Panda, Sanjay Khuntia and Tapas Samal and all the other staff members and founder members of the institution were also present.

# In Ganjam 15 hospitalised after consuming country liquor

7 arrested; 55 litres of liquor seized  
**PNS** ■ BRAHMAMPUR  
More than 15 persons fell ill after consuming country liquor in the Chikiti area of Ganjam district on Tuesday. They were rushed to the Chikiti hospital. As per reports, all the victims are from Karbala and Jenasahi villages in the Chikiti area. They consumed country liquor sold near Moundpur on Monday night and soon started vomiting. As their condition deteriorated, they were admitted to Chikiti hospital. While 11 among them were admitted to the medicine ward, two each have been admitted to the casualty ward and ICU as their conditions deteriorated. Getting information, police and excise officials reached the spot and conducted searches in Moundpur, Jenapur, Karbala villages and nearby areas. It was yet to be ascertained whether the persons fell sick due to spurious liquor or not. No arrest in this connection has been made so far. "Conditions of the patients undergoing treatment at the medicine ward are stable. Two persons are getting treatment in ICU. We are taking stock of the situation. We have already started a field inquiry and taken actions. More action will be taken in this connection. We are having close coordination to provide medical facilities. Awareness is also being spread at the village. We are ready for any kind of issue. The sample of the country liquor has been sent for testing. We will take strong action against any kind of excise rule violation," said Ganjam Collector Dibya Jyoti Parida. Seven persons from Maundapur village were arrested in connection with the case and 55 litres of country liquor was seized by excise officials.



# Sanskrit Week Fest begins at CUO

**PNS** ■ KORAPUT  
The Department of Sanskrit at the Central University of Odisha, Koraput, is currently hosting a Sanskrit Week Festival. The celebration began on August 16 which will continue till August 26. Throughout the week, numerous competitions are scheduled to be organised for the university's students, including events such as Shloka recitation, essay writing, speech, painting, and Rangoli competitions. As part of the series of events, the Sanskrit Week Festival was inaugurated by the Sanskrit Department on Friday. Presiding over the inauguration ceremony, Prof Narsingh Charan Panda, Dean, School of Languages and Head of the Department of Sanskrit, stated that Sanskrit is the language of the gods and efforts should be made to make it a common language. He also urged everyone to engage in Sanskrit conversation and shared his thoughts on the importance of Sanskrit in human life. All the faculty members of the Sanskrit Department, including Dr Sanjeev Sarkar, Dr Naveen Kumar Pradhan, Dr Devashish Karmakar, Dr Birendra Kumar Sarangi, and Satyabrata Mishra, participated. On the occasion, a Shloka recitation competition was organised for the department's students.

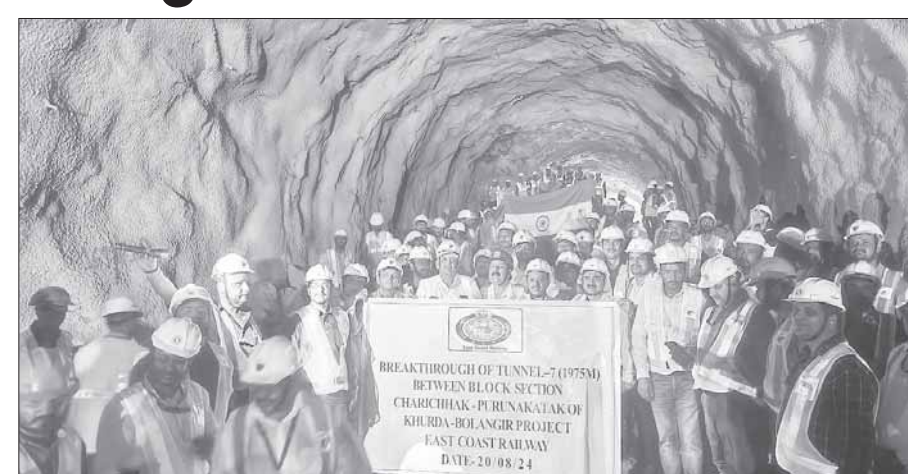


# In Brahmapur Raksha Purnima tragedy: 2 siblings killed by cousin

**RAJEEV RATHAN** ■ BRAHMAMPUR  
What should have been a sacred day of sibling love and protection turned into a nightmare in Brahmapur Badabazar police station area. On the auspicious occasion of Raksha Purnima, a day traditionally marked by the promise of lifelong protection between siblings, a heart-wrenching tragedy unfolded, leaving a family in shock and a community in mourning. In a horrifying incident that took place on Monday afternoon, 13-year-old Prajokta Panigrahy and her younger brother, Ayushman Panigrahy, were brutally stabbed by their own cousin, Ashutosh, at their family home in Badabazar. The siblings, who had come to their cousin's house for a Shradha Puja, were upstairs in a room while the rest of the family gathered downstairs for the rituals. Suddenly, a piercing scream echoed through the house, prompting the family to rush upstairs. To their horror, they discovered Prajokta and Ayushman lying in a pool of blood, their bodies covered in multiple stab wounds. Ashutosh, who had committed the attack, was nowhere to be found. The critically injured siblings were immediately rushed to the Maharaja Krishna Chandra Gajapati (MKCG) Medical College and Hospital in Brahmapur. Despite the doctors' best efforts, Prajokta succumbed to her injuries, leaving the family devastated. Ayushman, who is in a critical condition, has been transferred to a private hospital in Bhubaneswar for specialized treatment, as his life hangs in the balance. Meanwhile, Ashutosh, in a desperate attempt to end his own life, fled the scene and was involved in a serious accident near Hinjilicut Pochilima Square, where he was hit by a bus. Severely injured, he was found by local residents and later rescued by the police, who admitted him to the hospital. The incident has sent shockwaves through the community, especially on a day meant to celebrate the unbreakable bond between brothers and sisters. Badabazar police have launched a full investigation into the tragic events, trying to uncover the motive behind Ashutosh's unimaginable act of violence. As the community mourns the loss of young Prajokta and prays for Ayushman's recovery, the once joyful celebration of Raksha Purnima will forever be stained by this senseless act of bloodshed.

# Khurda Rd-B'nglr rly project Breakthrough achieved in 2-km tunnel

**Between Purunakatak, Charichhak**  
**PNS** ■ BHUBANESWAR  
In a significant achievement in Khurda Road-Balangir Rail Line Project, the East Coast Railway (ECOR) has successfully completed the breakthrough of a 1,975-meter-long tunnel (Tunnel No. 07) between Purunakatak and Charichhak. This marks a critical step forward in the ongoing efforts to expand and improve rail connectivity in the region. The Ministry of Railways has prioritized the timely completion of key infrastructure projects in Odisha, recognizing their importance to the State's development. The Khurda Road-Balangir Rail Line is one such project, aimed at enhancing connectivity and fostering economic growth in the region. Union Minister of Railways Ashwini Vaishnaw has been closely monitoring the progress of various railway projects across Odisha. His leadership and directives to coordinate efforts across agencies have been instrumental in pushing the long-pending project towards completion. The breakthrough of the 1,975-meter tunnel was achieved by the skilled engineering team of the ECOR Construction Wing, who carried out the final detonation in Boudh district. The milestone is a testament to the dedication and technical expertise of the team involved. Of the total 301 km planned for the Khurda Road-Balangir project, 183 km of the rail line has already been commissioned. The project is being executed from both ends, Khurda Road and Balangir, to expedite its completion. To date, 106 km from Khurda Road to Daspalla and 77 km from Balangir to Jharmunda have been commissioned. Additionally, the 16.27-km stretch from Jharmunda to Boudh is also complete. The next segment, from Boudh to Purunakatak, covering approximately 27 km, is anticipated to be finished within the coming months. The completion of such large-scale railway project hinges on various factors, including timely land acquisition, forest clearance, relocation of utilities, obtaining statutory clearances, and managing the geological and topographical challenges of the area. Despite these hurdles, significant progress has been made.





# 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

## 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 Chief 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?"

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 Bhagalpur villages flooded after embankment breach

PTI n BHAGALPUR

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."

"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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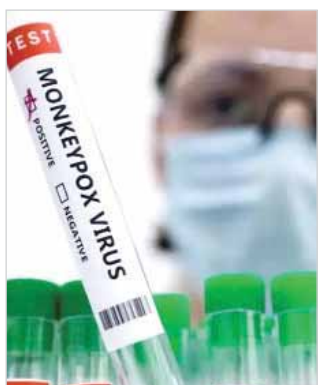
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PAPER WITH PASSION

## 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

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



ASHOK K MEHTA

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 fillip 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

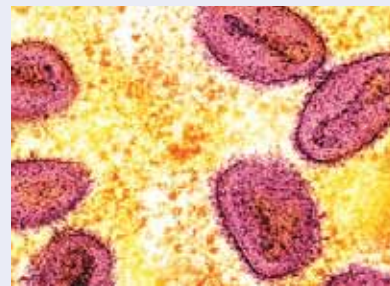
#### CHANKYA OF INDIAN POLITICS

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, 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-held 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 October 7 and rampaged across the south, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and taking around 250 people hostage. Over 100 hostages were released in exchange for Palestinians imprisoned in Israel during a weeklong cease-fire last year. Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed over 40,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not say how many were militants. Air and ground operations have caused widespread destruction and forced the vast majority of Gaza's 2.3 million residents to flee their homes, often multiple times. Aid groups fear the outbreak of diseases like polio. The Palestinian Civil Defense, first responders operating under the Hamas-run government, said the strike on the Mustafa Hafez school in Gaza City killed at least 10 people and that they were still searching for survivors. It said around 700 people were sheltering at the school when it was hit.

# 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 Houthis 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

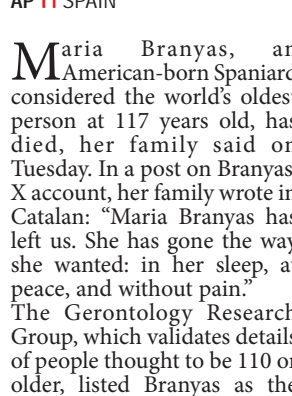
**PTI n LONDON**  
A UK-based Indian students' group organised a protest in Scotland and submitted a memorandum to the Indian mission in Edinburgh demanding urgent steps to address gender-based violence in the wake of the rape and murder case of a medic in Kolkata. The Students' Federation of India-United 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 Branyas, 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 Branyas' X account, her family wrote in Catalan: "Maria Branyas 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 Branyas 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, Branyas 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 Branyas 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."

# 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.

more than 600 since the massive protest by students first started in mid-July. An interim government was formed after the fall of the Hasina-led government, and 84-year-old Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus was named

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 after 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 hospitalised 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, 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.

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 centage 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



**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**  
A 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.

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.

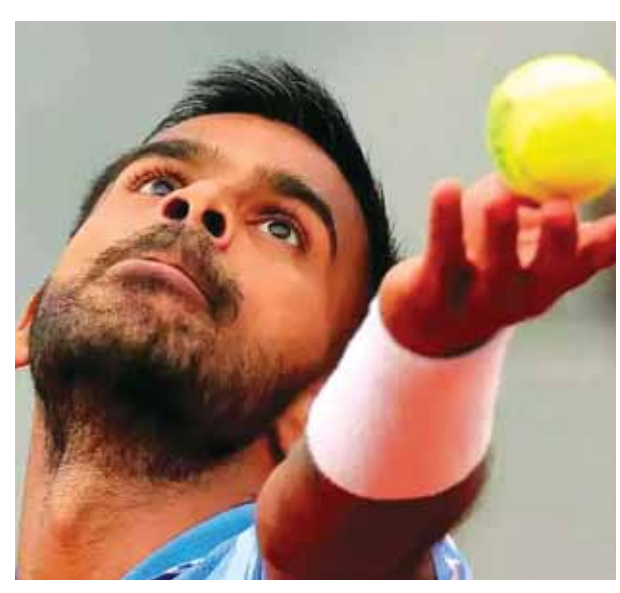


## Bhushan's T-Series announces a biopic on Indian cricketer Yuvraj

**PTI ■ MUMBAI**  
An upcoming biographical 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 "Drishtiyam 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.

## 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 Elina 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.

## Debutants grab goals for Juventus

**AP ■ LECCO (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 off-season.

## 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.

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER**  
**CUTTACK (R&B) DIVISION NO. I: CUTTACK**  
E-Mail: LD.eswredcuttack@gmail.com  
Tel./ Fax No. (0671)-2504128

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA "e" procurement Notice**  
**e-procurement Notice for Building (E.I.) works**  
**Bid Identification No. S.E. CTC(R&B) - 15 of 2024-25**

The Superintending Engineer, Cuttack (R&B) Division No. I, Cuttack on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites on Percentage rate basis bid in **Single Cover System** in ONLINE MODE from eligible contractor for building work (Fire Fighting) as mentioned below .

- No. of the Work :- **07 (Seven) Nos. of E.I Works**
- Date & time of availability of bid document in the portal :- **From dt.27/08/2024 to 5PM of dt.05/09/2024**
- Last date / time of receipt of bids in the portal :- **5PM of dt.05/09/2024**
- Date & time of opening of bids :- **11 A.M of dt.06/09/2024**
- Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid :- **Superintending Engineer, Cuttack (R&B) Division No. I, Cuttack**

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal "<https://tendersodisha.gov.in>"  
(Er. P.K. Majhi)  
**Superintending Engineer**  
**Cuttack (R&B) Division No.I**

OIPR-34091/11/0017/2425

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
**PANCHAYATI RAJ & DRINDING WATER DEPTT.**  
**-X-X-X-X-X-**  
**OFFICE OF THE PANCHAYAT SAMITI, SOHELA**  
At-Sohela, Po-SOHELA, Dist-Bargarh, Pin-768033  
E-mail:- orl-sohela@nic.in  
Dt. 17-08-2024

**National Competitive Bidding through e-procurement**  
**Bid Identification No. 02 /2024-25**

The BDO, SOHELA on behalf of PANCHAYAT SAMITI, SOHELA invites Percentage bid through e-procurement in single cover system according to norm of e-Procurement system in on-line mode. Bid Documents consisting of work , Cost of Tender Paper , EMD , Time of Completion , Class of Contractor and the set of Terms and conditions and other necessary documents can be seen in Govt website , i.e [www.tendersodisha.gov.in](http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in)

- Nature of Work :- **Building Construction work as mentioned in DTCN.**
- No. of works :- **1 (One Nos.)**
- Estimate Cost :- **Rs. 22,85,401/-**
- Period of Completion :- **150 Days**
- Class of Contractor :- **"B" or "C" Class**
- Date & Time of availability of Bid Documents in the portal for Bidding :- **11.00 AM on dt.28-08-2024 up to 05.00 PM on dt.13-09-2024**
- Last date & time for receipt of Bids :- **13-09-2024 at 05.00 PM.**
- Bid opening Date :- **Dt.18-09-2024 at 11.00 AM**

The bidders have to participate in online bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website <https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in>  
**Block Development Officer**  
**SOHELA**

OIPR-19411/11/0002/2425

**TATA STEEL**  
**TATA**

**PUBLIC NOTIFICATION**

Notice is hereby given to all users of Railway lines and premises situated on the complete section of phase-II "Line No-16 ext, line no. 34, line no. 35, line no. 8B, line no. 28 ext, line no. 29, line no. 30, line no. 31 and Line No-27B of TATA STEEL PLANT Yard at Kalinganagar of Khurda Road Division of East Coast Railway that the 25,000 Volts, 50 Hz, A.C. Over Head Traction Wires will be energized on or after the date specified against the section, on and from the same date the overhead Traction Lines shall be treated as live at all times and no unauthorized person shall approach or work in the proximity of the said over Head Lines.

**SECTION - I: Electrification of phase-II "Line No-16 ext, line no. 34, line no. 35, line no. 8B, line no. 28 ext, line no. 29, line no. 30, line no. 31 and Line No-27B" of TATA STEEL Plant Yard at Kalinganagar" of Khurda Road Division.**

Sl. No.	Section/Line	Chainage		TKM
		From Location	To Location	
1	Line no. 16 ext.	Loc No. TSL-12/16 ext-03 CH:12/777.50	Loc No. TSL-12/34-12 CH:12/962.02	0.185 TKM
2	Line no. 34	Loc No. TSL-2448 CH:12/564.00	Loc No. TSL-13/34-21 CH: 13/772.02	1.208 TKM
3	Line no. 35	Loc No. TSL-12/35-01 CH:12/683.02	Loc No. TSL-13/35-21 CH:13/754.02	1.071 TKM
4	Line no. 28 ext.	Loc No. TSL-09/28 ext-03 CH:09/561.53	Loc No. TSL-10/28 ext-10 CH: 10/341.960	0.780 TKM
5	Line No. 8B	Loc No. TSL-11/08B-17 CH: 11/615.46	Loc No. TSL- 10/08B-01 CH: 10/215.96	1.400 TKM
6	Line No. 29 (including X over)	Loc No. TSL-11/29-02 CH: 11/409.52	Loc No. TSL- 12/29-08 CH: 12/408.52.	0.999 TKM
7	Line No. 30 (including X over)	Loc No. TSL- 11/08B-17 CH: 12/746.02	Loc No. TSL-12/36-07 CH: 11/615.46	1.131 TKM
8	Line No. 31 (including X over)	Loc No. TSL-11/31-02 CH: 11/645.48	Loc No. TSL- 12/31-15 CH: 12/704.88	1.059 TKM
9	Line No. 27B	Loc No. TSL-08/27-02 CH: 08/561.80	Loc No. TSL- 09/32 CH: 09/725.40	1.164 TKM
				<b>8.997 TKM</b>

Copy forwarded for kind information to:-

1. Secretary to GM/ECOR for kind information please.	10. Sr. DEN/Co-ord/KUR, Sr. DEN(Central)	20. ADEN/JJKR
2. PCEE/ECOR/BBS	11. Sr. DFM/KUR	21. CTPC/KUR
3. PCOM/ECOR/BBS	12. Sr. DOM/KUR	22. SSE/OHE & JE/PSI/JJKR
4. PCE/ECOR/BBS	13. Sr. DME/JJKR	23. SSE(PWay)/JJKR
5. PCSE/ECOR/BBS	14. Sr. DEE/G/KUR	24. ASTE/JJKR
6. PCSO/ECOR/BBS	15. Sr. DEE/OP/KUR	25. ADEE/OP/JJKR
7. PCSO/ECOR/BBS	16. Sr. DSTE/KUR	26. SSE/Signal/JJKR
8. Superintendent, GRP/JJKR	17. Sr. DSO/KUR	27. SSE/Elect/G/JJKR
9. DRM/KUR	18. Sr. DSC/KUR	28. Chief C.C./JJKR
	19. DEE/TRD/JJKR	29. Chief DTI/JJKR
		30. M/s Siemens Ltd

**INDIAN RAILWAYS**  
**INTRODUCTION OF AC 25 KV TRACTION**  
**"WARNING TO ROAD USERS"**

It is notified for information of the Public that in connection with introduction of 25 kv AC electric traction over the section of phase-II, line no. 16 ext, line no. 34, line no. 35, line no. 8B, line no. 28 ext, line no. 29, line no. 30, line no. 31 and line no. 27B at Tata Steel Plant Kalinganagar, Duburi in Khurda Road division of the East Coast Railway, height gauges have been erected at all the level crossings (Plant gate no. 3 **between** most location no. TSL09/27-10 and TSL-09/27-11) with clear height of 4.78m above road level with a view to prevent loads of excessive height from coming into contact or dangerous proximity to live traction wire wire (contact wire), which shall be at a height of minimum 5.5m above the rail level at level crossings.

Public are hereby notified to observe the height specified above for the purpose of loading vehicles and to see that the loads carried in road vehicles do not infringe the height gauges under any circumstances.

The dangers of a load of excessive height are as follows.

- Danger to the height gauge and consequent obstruction to the road as well as the Railway Line.
- Danger to the materials or equipment carried or the vehicle itself.
- Danger of fire and risk of life due to contact with or dangerous proximity to the conductors.

**Project Head**  
**M/s TATA STEEL Ltd.**  
**Kalinganagar**

Date of Energization: 20.09.2024

Registered Office: Bombay House, 24, Homi Mody Street, Fort, Mumbai 400 001, India  
Tel.: 022 66658282 Fax: 022 66657724  
(CIN) -L27100MH1907PLC000260 Website: www.tatasteel.com