

OPINION 6

ANOTHER SURPRISE REGIME CHANGE IN NEIGHBOURHOOD

WORLD 8

ISRAEL RECOVERS BODIES OF 6 HOSTAGES FROM GAZA

MONEY 10

SENSEX REBOUNDS 370 POINTS

DEHRADUN, WEDNESDAY AUGUST 21, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹3

Established 1864

the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com

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

Late City Vol. 18 Issue 230
*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

SPORTS LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL: MANU TELLS STUDENTS
11 SPORTS



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

CAPITAL STRANDED



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



TRAI to crackdown on bogus telemarketers

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

Centre asks UPSC to cancel “lateral entry” recruitment on 45 positions

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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



FILE PHOTO

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

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

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

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

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

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



Statement of ISBT gangrape victim to be registered today

Police seek PCR of five accused for interrogation

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The statement of the victim in the Dehradun ISBT gangrape case will be recorded before the magistrate on Wednesday.

ed that a surveillance team was dispatched to Delhi to gather crucial evidence and CCTV footage related to the incident.

will be meticulously included in the case file. The SIT is also preparing to obtain a police custody remand (PCR) of all accused to ensure a thorough investigation and expedite legal proceedings, he added.



has been collecting all relevant evidence and conducting a comprehensive review of the case. He stated

recorded before the magistrate on Wednesday. The SSP stated that all important evidence and testimonies

was raped in the ISBT parking lot inside the bus. Later, a security guard at the ISBT noticed the girl, around 1:30 AM on August 13, who was sitting at a shop while a man was allegedly interacting with her. The guard alerted the 1098 Child Helpline after finding the situation suspicious.

SSP forms SIT to probe nurse's rape & murder in Udhm Singh Nagar

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

After the family of the victim expressed some apprehensions in the Uttarakhand nurse rape and murder case despite the arrest of one accused, the senior superintendent of police of Udhm Singh Nagar Manjunath TC formed a Special Investigation Team (SIT) on Tuesday to investigate the case from all the angles.

Dharmendra, who worked as a labourer in Udhm Singh Nagar's Gadarpur area, from Rajasthan on August 13. He was sent to jail on August 14 based on CCTV footage and physical evidence.

Monsoon session of Uttarakhand Vidhan Sabha starts today

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Monsoon session of the Uttarakhand Vidhan Sabha will commence on Wednesday at Bharadisaan in Garisain, Chamoli district.

The session at the summer Capital Gairsain is being held after an interval of 17 months. The last session at Bharadisaan was held in March 2023 when the Pushkar Singh Dhami government passed the annual budget there.

The session is likely to be stormy with the opposition Congress deciding to corner the State government on the issues of law and order and callous handling of the disaster management and mitigation in the State. The ruling BJP however will make every possible effort to negate the attack from the opposition benches.

The meetings of the legislature parties of BJP and Congress were held in Bharadisaan on Tuesday afternoon in which both the parties devised their strategies to be adopted during the house.

The meeting of the business advisory committee was also held in the Vidhan Sabha building on Tuesday. The meeting was chaired by the Assembly speaker Ritu Bhushan Khanduri and

Govt insensitive towards victims of Kedarnath disaster: Arya

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Head of the monsoon session of Uttarakhand Vidhan Sabha, the leader of opposition (LoP) Yashpal Arya has accused the State government of being insensitive towards the disaster affected people. Arya visited Parwadi village located in the vicinity of the Bharadisaan Assembly building and met the family members of Himanshu Negi who is missing since July 31 from Gaurikund. Narendra Singh Negi, the father of the missing youngster, told Arya that his son has been missing since July 31, the day when disaster struck the Kedarnath area. He said that a missing report was submitted in the Sonprayag police station on August 3 but the report was

registered on August 12. The family members of Himanshu Negi alleged that the administration is not giving any information about him. Arya alleged that the State government has not put any information in public domain about the missing, injured and ill people in the Kedarnath disaster. He said that a large number of people from different parts of the country are arriving in Kedarnath in search of their missing family members and instead of helping them the State government is acting in an inhuman and insensitive manner towards them. The Dwarahat MLA Madan Bisht and former MLA Manoj Rawat also accompanied Arya.



was attended by the Parliamentary Affairs minister Prem Chand Agarwal, leader of opposition (LoP) Yashpal Arya and other senior leaders.

The Pushkar Singh Dhami government will table many important bills during the session. It will also table a supplementary budget of about Rs 5,000 crore in the house. On the opening day the house will pass a motion of condolence on the death of Kedarnath MLA Shaila Rani Rawat. The speaker Khanduri reviewed the preparations for the assembly session at Bharadisaan on Tuesday. Later interacting with media-persons the Speaker said that he had held meetings with the senior officers of administration and police in Dehradun recently in which orders for making all the arrangements were given. She expressed confidence that the session will be held smoothly.

SCPCR holds meeting on illegal operation of madarasas in Dehradun

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The chairperson of the State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR), Geeta Khanna asked the Madarsa Education Board to provide an updated list of registered madarasas in Dehradun district and whether children studying there are enrolled in regular schools too. She also asked for a detailed report about the provision for residential facilities in madarasas, a list of children studying in these madarasas and details of the hostel facilities available for them. Khanna further sought information about the designated hours of study in the madarasas. She stated this in a meeting organised by SCPCR on Tuesday

which was attended by the officials from the Mussoorie Dehradun Development Authority (MDDA), Madarsa Education Board and child psychologist Nishat Iqbal, among others, to address the issue of illegal madarasas operating in Dehradun district. Khanna asked MDDA to provide a report on the construction conditions and regulations for hostel buildings in schools and madarasas. She also instructed them to provide a detailed report to the commission on schools operating without proper approval on agricultural land in the Vikasnagar. She also sought a detailed report on the construction conditions and reg-

ulations for hostel buildings in schools and madarasas as well as an account of those operating on leased land. She also asked the officials to investigate the legitimacy, recognition and proposed legal status of a madarsa located in Azad Colony and submit a detailed report. Khanna also expressed disappointment on the absence of the several key officials, including the director of Primary Education, the deputy registrar and the chief medical officer of Dehradun district among others. She said that the commission will send letters to these departments concerned and asked them to attend the next scheduled meeting.

Gangrape victim refuses to return home with father

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The 16-year-old girl, who was allegedly gangraped by five men inside an Uttarakhand roadways bus parked at Dehradun ISBT has refused to go back with her father. The Dehradun district probation officer Meena Bisht told 'The Pioneer' that the girl's father had travelled to Dehradun from Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh on

Monday to meet her and take her home. However, the girl refused to return with him right now. She said,

"The girl was going to stay here anyway considering the ongoing investigation. She will remain at Balika Niketan for a few more days as the investigation continues. We will revisit this topic again after

a few days to know if she wants to return home." Bisht also informed that the victim's medical examination has been completed and she is currently in stable physical health. She said that the victim has been receiving regular counselling sessions at Balika Niketan by counsellors and psychiatrists. "All steps are being taken to ensure she feels

safe and stays healthy physically and mentally considering the recent incident. Further decisions will be taken considering her overall welfare," she added.

Besides this, the police also informed that the minor's medical report has been received and included in the investigation.

Advertisement for Punjab National Bank (PNB) E-Auction Sale Notice. It includes details about the bank, the auction of secured assets, and a table listing various properties with their details and sale dates.



FIRST COLUMN

THE HIGH COST OF FAST FASHION

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



SHAINY SHARMA

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

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

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



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

Workers in fast fashion supply chains often endure poor working conditions and low wages. In many cases, these exploitative labor practices are linked to environmental degradation, as manufacturers in low-regulation regions cut costs by disregarding environmental standards. Thus, the social and environmental issues of fast fashion are intertwined. Despite these concerns, fast fashion remains popular due to its affordability and the constant influx of new styles. Many consumers, particularly those on tight budgets, are unaware of or choose to overlook the ethical and environmental implications of their purchases. However, there is a growing movement toward sustainable fashion, driven by increasing awareness of these issues. Sustainable fashion prioritizes quality over quantity, using eco-friendly materials and ethical production practices. Some brands are adopting circular economy principles, focusing on recycling, upcycling, and designing products for durability.

Consumers must be educated about the environmental consequences of their choices, and governments should implement stricter regulations on textile production and promote recycling initiatives. Encouraging sustainable practices and fostering demand for eco-friendly products can push the industry toward more responsible production methods. The shift from fast fashion to sustainable alternatives is critical for reducing the industry's environmental and social toll.

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

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

Gas pricing: Reforms turn into a control regime



UTTAM GUPTA

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



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

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

Before April 2023, under the pricing guidelines effective since November 2014, supplies from these fields used to be a weighted average (WA) of prices of NG at four international locations: Henry Hub (the USA), Alberta Gas (Canada), NBP (National Balancing Point) (the UK), and Russian Gas. The prices used for arriving at the WA were over twelve months. It was revised every six months in a financial year (FY).

The four global hubs have fairly mature gas markets and the prices obtained there are pretty reasonable. Moreover, considering that the prices for twelve consecutive months were used for arriving at the WA, it smoothened out the month-to-month variations thereby ensuring that the price to the consumers was 'stable'. From April 1, 2023, the government changed the above system based on the recommendations of the Kirit Parikh committee (2022). Under the new formula, for any given month, the price expressed per million



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



SATENDRA SINGH

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

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

Similarly, in Gujarat in 2020, an Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) worker was raped while on duty. According to a study published in the 'Journal of Global

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Israel recovers bodies of 6 hostages from Gaza

AP ■ JERUSALEM



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

A blow to Hamas, which hopes to exchange hostages for Palestinian prisoners, an Israeli withdrawal and a lasting ceasefire. 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 Dancycy, 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."

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.

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.

PTI ■ 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.

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.

Iran behind Trump campaign hack: US intelligence officials

AP ■ WASHINGTON



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."

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

AP ■ 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.

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."

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."

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.

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.

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

AP ■ 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.

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.

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.

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.

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

PTI ■ 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.

diapers. "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 Alakta Das, another PhD candidate at the University of Edinburgh and one of the organisers as SFI's Edinburgh Subcommittee Member.

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.

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

AP ■ 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 ■ 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.

Sensex rebounds 370 points; bank, finance stocks spurt

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Stock market benchmark indices 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.



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.

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.

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 Reserve Open Market Committee) meeting minutes to be released on Wednesday," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

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

PTI ■ 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.

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.

Rupee rises 8 paise to 83.79 against US dollar

PTI ■ 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.

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Reserve Bank of India (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.

"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.

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

PTI ■ 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.



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.

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."

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Moody's Ratings on Tuesday said 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.

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

PTI ■ 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.

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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



route to her 15th WTA title. She had never gotten past the semifinals at Cincinnati, losing three times in that round. The 26-year-old Sabalenka can now be considered a favorite at the US Open. The Belarusian missed Wimbledon with a shoulder injury, then returned to the tour at Washington two weeks ago. "I would say that I'm really playing great tennis," Sabalenka said. "Probably not the best tennis I can play but I'm definitely getting there. Hopefully at the US Open I can reach even higher levels." Against Pegula, Sabalenka took

17 minutes to build a 4-1 lead in the first set. Pegula, who double-faulted five times, broke serve for the first time to tie the second set at 5-all, but Sabalenka won the next two games to finish off the 1-hour, 14-minute match. "She was playing at a high level and never really came down," Pegula said. "When she's serving really well, it's tough, especially on these fast courts." The sixth-ranked Pegula had a challenging road to the final. After defending her title at Toronto, the American played two matches on Friday because of weather-related postponements and had three matches go three sets. Her time on the court exceeded Sabalenka's by more than two hours entering the final. "I'm proving to myself that I can play a lot of matches and overcome a lot of challenges," Pegula said. "I'm looking forward to not doing anything for a few days." Sabalenka joined top-ranked Iga Swiatek as the only players with 10 or more WTA titles since 2020.

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

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

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



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

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

communicating.