



DSPL-79



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

Watch Live:  | Sports Odisha

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Welcome Roadshow

Biju Patnaik International Airport to
Kalinga Stadium

12.30 P.M. Onwards



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Strike by resident doctors continues

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Members of the Resident Doctors' Association in Lucknow decided to continue their strike and the cessation of all non-essential services on Tuesday until their demands are met.

The doctors organised protest meetings, street plays (nukkad natak), and candle marches at their respective institutes in support of the Kolkata rape and murder victim and other recent incidents of violence against healthcare workers.

At RMLIMS, the outpatient departments (OPDs) were partially operational, while faculty members at KGMU and SGPGI managed the OPDs. The Resident Doctors' Associations of Lucknow (SGPGIMS, RMLIMS, KGMU, and KSSSCI) expressed their solidarity with the nationwide outcry against the recent heinous acts of violence, including the rape and murder of a nursing staff member in



Kolkata, the attack on a female doctor in Mumbai, and the rape of a minor girl. Dr Sanjay Chaudhary from the Resident Doctors' Association, SGPGI, stated, "In response to these frequent acts of verbal and physical violence, we are committed to continuing our protest with the suspension of non-essential healthcare services until justice is served and our safety is ensured. Our demands include a swift investigation and arrest of the culprits, immediate implementation of the Central Protection Act, intervention by the Home Ministry

to provide protection for resident doctors in Kolkata, and the formation of a Doctor Protection Cell at national, state, city, and institute levels. This cell would be responsible for protecting on- and off-duty doctors and addressing any violence against them." Chaudhary mentioned that it was difficult to predict when the strike would end. "We are aligning with the national sentiment and coordinating with other hospitals and colleges in the city," he said, noting that they are monitoring the situation closely and pushing

for the arrest of the main culprits. Dr Vineet Mishra, president of the Resident Doctors Association at RMLIMS, said they held a street play to raise awareness about their demands. He urged public support, emphasising that significant change requires widespread backing. He also called for improved security measures, including guards and enhanced police protection, stating, "We are not here to be assaulted; we need some form of protection." Ranvijay Patel from the Resident Doctors' Association

(KGMU) insisted that the culprits should face the death penalty. "We will not end the strike until our demands are met," he said. "The implementation of the Central Protection Act is crucial. What has happened should not happen again in the future," he added.

Resident doctor Moeen highlighted that there have been numerous violent incidents against doctors in the past month and expressed frustration over the delay in implementing the Central Protection Act. The ongoing strike has disrupted health services, with a senior doctor noting that the absence of residents impacts the quality of care and has led to patient suffering. Some patients, unaware of the strike, faced difficulties. Abhishek Singh from Kanpur, seeking treatment for his sister at RMLIMS, said the strike created problems for patients travelling from afar. Nand Kumar from Gonda said that his wife, suffering from cancer, did not receive attention due to the strike. Nisha, another attendant, said her brother, who has gallstones, could not be seen by a doctor because of the strike.

Kidnapping case unveils escort service racket

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The recent arrest of three youths and two women in a kidnapping case in Gomti Nagar has unveiled a broader criminal network operating under the guise of escort services in Lucknow.

The accused were apprehended on Sunday, and the police successfully rescued the victim. During the investigation, it was revealed that the accused had also been involved in fraudulent activities under the pretense of providing escort services.

The extent of their criminal operations came to light through video footage and chat records found on their mobile phones. The police are now examining their call detail records to dismantle the entire network.

According to police interrogation, the accused lured customers by offering escort services, demanding payment in advance, and then disappearing. If customers attempted to contact them persistently, the accused would threaten to

frame them in fake cases. The accused reportedly ran multiple websites under various names, from which customers could contact them.

After agreeing on rates and sending a photo of the escort, they would ask for an advance. If the advance was insufficient, they would send the escort to the agreed location but would flee with the money before the meeting.

Complaints from customers were met with threats of false rape accusations. The accused had set rates and communicated details via WhatsApp. Hundreds of photographs of young women were found on their phones, along with numerous personal and group chats, revealing that they operated an escort service.

They used QR codes for payments and would cut off communication after receiving the money. This operation had been ongoing for about two years.

The police have arrested five accused so far: Faisal Ali from Barabanki, Desh Deepak Pandey from Bareilly, Avinash

Mehrotra, Sania Khan, and Seema Goyal from Odisha. Among them, Avinash is a B.Tech graduate from Delhi Technical University, while Faisal and Desh Deepak have completed Intermediate.

The case came to light on August 16 when the gang kidnapped a youth near Gwari village in Gomti Nagar and demanded a ransom of Rs 50,000 from his mother.

The police traced the gang and rescued the victim, leading to the arrests.

Police sources said that the escort service racket operates like a form of prostitution, with brokers creating websites and IDs for different cities. This network is extensive, with brokers facilitating the supply of women to various locations.

They use these websites for blackmail and extortion. The police are continuing their investigation to uncover the full extent of the network and are pursuing other members based on the call details. Under new laws, those involved in such activities face life imprisonment.

CLASSIFIEDS
NOTICE

I have changed my name from FIRAUS AFREEN to FIRDOUS AFREEN. In future I shall be known as FIRDOUS AFREEN. FIRDOUS AFREEN W/o Farogh Ahmad Ansari, 492 Dariyabad, Attarsuiya, Dargah Hazrat Abbas, Prayagraj.

CLASSIFIEDS
NOTICE

I had lost the Original Allotment Letter, Possession Letter, Lease Deed, Free Hold Deed, First Registry and some other relevant documents of my registered property situated at Sector K-1-1347, Ashiyana, Kanpur Road Lucknow. Anurag Yadav S/o Late Jageshwar Prasad Yadav R/o-A-72, PR First Floor, Wali Badar Apartment, Sitapur Road Lucknow.7

CLASSIFIEDS
NOTICE

It is inform that my wife name mistakenly reported in my army record as JANKLALI PANDEY. But in all documents, his correct name mentioned as JANAK LALI PANDEY. So in further he will be known as this name. Durgesh Dhar Diwedi, Village- Gyanipur Ram Prasad, Post- Andhiyari, Tahsil- Mankapur, Gonda, UP- 271302.

CLASSIFIEDS
NOTICE

I have changed my name from FATIMA ZUBAIR to FATIMA KHAN. In future I shall be known as FATIMA KHAN. FATIMA KHAN W/o Mohammad Shadab, 338 Old Katra, Prayagraj, UP

CLASSIFIEDS
NOTICE

NOTICE
I, Daya Ram Agrawal S/o D P Agrawal, was carrying original documents relating to my Plot No. E-422, Measuring 450.00 Sq.mt Situated at Transport Nagar, Hind Nagar Lucknow, while going to my lawyer Vishal Mehrotra at Raj Chambers Dainik Jagran Chauraha Lucknow on 20.08.2024 Around 01.30 PM. I have lost/misplaced the following documents of my land.
Assignment deed registered on 06.02.2020 vide Book No. 01 Volume 3796, Pages 231 to 254 Serial No. 3537 at the office of Sub Registrar Sarojini Nagar Lucknow.
Assignment deed registered on 02.11.2006 vide Book No. 01 Volume 7891 pages 153 to 190 Serial 9183 at Sub Registrar Lucknow.
Lease Deed on 14.09.2004 vide Book No.01 Volume 6410 pages 01 to 28 Serial No. 7649 at Sub Registrar Lucknow.
Anybody finding the same, kindly return it to this contact Mob. 9839233103.

CLASSIFIEDS
NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE
Property Number - Plot Number 7, Block A, Scheme Number 38, Lakhnapur Mohalla, Lakhnapur Area: 793 square yards, i.e., 663.03 square meters Property Owner: Dr. Sunil Malhotra, S/o Late Dr. Mahesh Chandra (Seller), R/o 120/371 Lajpat Nagar, Kanpur Registered at the office of the Sub-Registrar, Kanpur Nagar. The original allotment letter and the original possession certificate of the above-mentioned property have been lost. Now the buyer want to mortgage the property to obtain a loan from Indian Bank, Lakhnapur branch. If anyone has any objections, they can submit their objections in writing to the Branch Manager at Indian Bank, Lakhnapur branch, within 7 days of the publication of this notice.
Authorized Officer
Indian Bank, Lakhnapur Branch, Kanpur
PD(691)A

CLASSIFIEDS
NOTICE

I am Ghulam Mehdi Rizvi, S/o Mohd. Abbas R/o-Abdullahpur Shahzadpur Tehsil Akbarpur District Ambedkar Nagar. The date of birth of my daughter Alizba Mehdi is mentioned in the pre-school documents as 4 September 2017, whereas as per the birth certificate, her actual date of birth is 4 September 2016. From now on, the correct date of birth of Alizba Mehdi should be considered as 4 September 2016.

CLASSIFIEDS
NOTICE

I Have Changed My Name From Gulzar To Mohammad Gulzar. S/o Intjar Khan R/o 24- A.B Nagar Unnao

CLASSIFIEDS
NOTICE

I Have Changed My Name From Asfa To. Asfa Farooqui W/o Mohammad Gulzar R/o 24- A.B Nagar Unnao

CLASSIFIEDS
NOTICE

I have changed my name from Errol Edwards to Erral Edwards to be known as Erral Edwards in all future references. Erral Edwards, Add.- 200/4 A Yogendra Vihar, Khandepur, Phase 2, Naubasta Kanpur.

CLASSIFIEDS
NOTICE

I, RAKESH holding Indian Passport No:R1051839 issued at LUCKNOW on 04/07/2017, Permanent Resident of 181 VILL DEWATAHA POST BALI KUSHI NAGAR PIN 274802 UTTAR PRADESH INDIA, presently residing at DUBAI UAE do hereby change my name from RAKESH to RAKESH (Given name) CHAUDHARY (Surname) with immediate effect

CLASSIFIEDS
NOTICE

I have changed my daughter name from Nistha Gupta to Nishtha Gupta in future. I'll be known as Nishtha Gupta D/O Manish Gupta R/O 164 A, Anand Vihar Naubasta Kanpur.

CLASSIFIEDS
सूचना

मोे हाईस्कूल मार्केटींग ने FATHER NAME -RAFEEQ हो गया है जो गलत है मेरा सही नाम FAHEEMUR RAHMAN S/O MOHAMMAD RAFEEQ है मुझे इसी नाम से जाना पहचाना जाये R/O - 80/303 Chamanganj Kanpur -208001

CLASSIFIEDS
NOTICE

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS
• CHANGE OF NAME •
I, JITENDRA PRAJAPATI alias JITENDRA KUMAR S/O RAMHIRDAY R/O 711 Gangatella Bashartapur Ward-10 Gorakhpur Uttar Pradesh-273003 changed my name to JITENDRA KUMAR.
PD(691)A

Youth held on charges of sexual exploitation, conversion attempt

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A youth from Barabanki was accused of befriending a girl by hiding his religious identity, sexually exploiting her for three years and forcing her to convert as a condition for marriage.

The victim filed a complaint against the accused at the Mahanagar police station on August 9. The police arrested the accused from Nishatganj Metro City Apartment on Monday. The accused, identified as Ziaul

Haq alias Zia of Bilkhiya in Ramnagar (Barabanki), worked as a driver in the said apartment where he met the girl. The victim stated in her complaint that while talking to him one day, she came to know that he belonged to a different faith.

"During our friendship, he recorded our videos and also clicked photographs, which he used to blackmail me," she alleged. The victim said she explained to him that he defrauded her by hiding his religious identity.

"This made him angry. He called me to meet him urgently. He forced me to convert and threatened to kill me if I refused. I somehow reached home and told my family about my ordeal," she told the police. The Mahanagar police said that the victim had given an application on August 9. "It is alleged that Ziaul Haq befriended her and had physical relations with her by hiding his religious identity. A team was formed and the accused was arrested," the police said.

Man found dead at abandoned house

Lucknow (PNS): A 56-year-old man was found dead under mysterious circumstances at an abandoned house in Dalibagh locality under Hazratganj police station on Monday. Earlier, residents noticed a foul smell emanating from the dilapidated building. Radheshyam Singh, a local resident, alerted the police. Upon arrival, police found the body of Raju alias Vijay Jain, a local resident. The deceased was said to have been addicted to drugs for 15-20 years and would often sleep in the abandoned house. The police noted there were no visible injuries on the body. The deceased's family, consisting of three sisters and one brother residing elsewhere, was informed and the body was

sent for autopsy. Meanwhile, a 50-year-old man was found dead in his room in Krishna Nagar on Tuesday. Sanjay Kumar of Para reported the death after receiving a call from Anita Singh. The police found the door bolted from inside. The police broke open the door and found Madhav Singh, about 50 years old, dead. The body appeared to have been 2-3 days old and there were no visible injuries. Six empty packets of country liquor were found nearby. The deceased lived alone and reared pigs for a living. The body sent for autopsy. In another case, an unidentified man was found dead in a paddy field in Kakori on Monday. The man was found lying face down around 11:30 am.

VEHICLE SEIZED, DRIVER PENALISED OVER STUNTS
The police have taken action against individuals performing dangerous stunts in Gomti Nagar Extension on Sunday. The intervention followed reports of youths performing stunts with their vehicles at Gate Number 6 of Janeshwar Mishra Park. A video of these activities, which was later shared widely on social media platform X, prompted the police to take immediate action. The video shows seven vehicles moving erratically, with the occupants creating a reel while driving in reverse and blowing horns. The police identified seven vehicles involved in the stunt. Gomti Nagar Extension Inspector Sudhir Awasthi said one vehicle was seized and its driver penalised.

Deepotsav in Ayodhya set to be grander

PNS ■ LUCKNOW/AYODHYA

The Yogi Adityanath government is set to elevate the grandeur of Deepotsav celebrations in Ayodhya this year. Following the consecration of Ram temple in Ayodhya, the first Deepotsav will feature a variety of attractions, including seven mechanised tableaux and a choreographed aerial green firecracker show. Ayodhya had set a world record during Deepotsav last year by lighting over 21 lakh earthen lamps (diyas) across 51 ghats, including Ram Ki Paidi. This year, the Yogi government aims to surpass that by illuminating Ayodhya with 25 lakh diyas. In addition, 500 locations within Ayodhya will be adorned with eye-catching signages, while 20 artistic installations dedicated to Lord Ram will be prominently featured. The Uttar Pradesh Tourism department has started the process of selecting agencies

and assigning tasks, with preparations for various Deepotsav events expected to start in September. The UP government is planning a grand 'Deepotsav 2024' from October 28 to October 31. The department of Tourism is preparing a detailed plan to enhance Ayodhya's beauty by lighting diyas on the ghats of the Sarayu river, decorating the riverbank, and organising cultural performances and festivities. The event aims to recreate the scenes of Lord Ram's return to Ayodhya.

In preparation for Deepotsav, the Tourism department will appoint an agency to design and oversee the setup for lighting over 25 lakh diyas at various locations, including Ram Ki Paidi in Ayodhya. The agency will also design the area for a record-breaking Aarti ceremony on the Sarayu river, which will involve 1,100 religious leaders, local celebrities, and residents of Ayodhya.

Additionally, the agency will coordinate training for volunteers two days prior to the event. The Guinness world record attempt will involve approximately 7,000 volunteers, including students from Avadh University, to ensure a smooth execution of the record-setting activities.

HIGH-TECH SECURITY MEASURES

In response to the growing influx of Lord Ram devotees into Ayodhya, the Yogi Adityanath government is fortifying the city with advanced high-tech security measures. The comprehensive security plan includes placing Ayodhya under extensive CCTV surveillance, ensuring both the safety of pilgrims and the maintenance of cleanliness. This system also allows authorities to monitor suspects from the Command and Control Centre while also keeping an eye on the basic amenities pro-

vided by the municipal corporation at intersections and streets.

The Yogi Adityanath government has already linked CCTV cameras installed outside homes, businesses, hotels, and offices to the control room in Amaniganj.

Following the installation of Ram Lalla idol in the Ayodhya temple, there has been a significant surge in the number of devotees visiting from across the country and abroad.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has emphasised that Ayodhya should be adorned and beautified in a way that inspires every visitor to return repeatedly. In line with this vision, the municipal corporation has taken a major initiative under the 'Safe City' project. The municipal corporation teams are actively encouraging local residents and traders to link their cameras to the monitoring room of the Command and Control Centre.

Bhatkhande univ convocation today

Lucknow (PNS): Bhatkhande Sanskriti Vishwavidyalaya is set to hold its 14th convocation on Wednesday. The ceremony will be presided over by Governor Anandiben Patel. Founder of SPIC MACAY Kiran Seth will be the chief guest, and Tourism and Culture Minister Jaiver Singh, the guest of honour. During the convocation, students who have achieved the highest marks in examinations and those who have earned research (PhD) degrees will be honoured. This year, male students have notably outpaced female students in getting degrees. For graduation, 42% of degree recipients are female and 58% are male. In postgraduate programmes, 46% are female and 54% are male students. Notably, in PhD, 100% of degree recipients are male. The trend extends to medal awards as well, with males receiving a larger share.

FORM NO. 5
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL
600/1, University Road,
Near Hanuman Setu Mandir,
Lucknow-226007
(Area of Jurisdiction-Part of Uttar Pradesh) Summons for filing & Appearance by Publication
O.A.No. 354/2024 Date: 06-08-2024
(Summons to defendant under section 19(3) of the Recovery of Debts due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with Rules 12 and 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 1993
ICICI BANK LTD. ...Applicant
VERSUS
ANIL & OTHERS ...Defendants
To, Defendant-
2, NEHA D/O CHOTE LAL (Adult)
R/o Devarai Kala, Bakshi Ka Talab,
Lucknow, U.P.-227202
In the above noted application, you are required to file in Paper Book form in two sets along with documents and affidavits (if any), personally or through your duly authorized agent or legal practitioner in this Tribunal, after serving copy of the same on the applicant or his counsel/duly authorized agent after publication of the summons, and thereafter to appear before the Tribunal on 27/08/2024 at 10:30 A.M. failing which the application shall be heard and decide in your absence.
Registrar
Debts Recovery Tribunal
Lucknow

REV Expo 2024 from Aug 23

Lucknow (PNS): 'REV Expo 2024', organised in collaboration with the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry, will be held at the Defence Expo Ground in Vrindavan Colony from August 23 to 25. The event serves as Uttar Pradesh's premier platform for showcasing innovations and technological advancements in renewable energy and electric vehicles. The event aims to bring together industry leaders, policymakers, and environmentally conscious consumers under one roof to explore the future of sustainable energy and mobility. Uttar Pradesh has made remarkable progress in renewable energy, achieving an impressive installed capacity of over 29,850 MW by 2024, primarily from solar and wind power. UP is advancing rapidly with its EV Manufacturing and Mobility Policy, launched in 2021.

Two cattle smugglers arrested

Meerut (PTI): Two suspected cattle smugglers were arrested after a gunfight with the police here early Tuesday in which one of them suffered gunshot injuries, officials said. The encounter took place in Kithaur area of the district. While two accused were nabbed, their three associates managed to escape. "A police team led by the Kithaur police station in-charge was conducting patrol

and checking in the area when they received a tip-off about some criminals planning cattle smuggling in the forest of village Radhna," a police spokesperson said. "The cattle smugglers opened fire at the police. The police fired back, injuring one of the smugglers in the right leg and arresting another at the scene," the official said. Those held were identified as Khalid and Munner.

NORTHERN RAILWAY
INDICATIVE NOTICE
Railway Recruitment Cell/Northern Railway
Employment Notice No. RRC/NR/05/2024/CQ Quota
RRC website: www.rrecn.org
Online Applications are invited from eligible Indian citizen for 02 vacancies in level 02 of Pay Matrix 7th Pay Commission against Cultural Quota recruitment for the year 2024-25 in Northern Railway.
IMPORTANT DATES
Date of Publication of Detailed Notification on RRC Website: 13/08/2024
Date & Time of Start of Online Application: At 00:00 Hrs on 16/08/2024
Date and Time of Closing of Online Application: At 00:00 Hrs on 16/09/2024
Expected Date of Online Written Examination: October 2024.
2593/2024 For Chairperson/RRC
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE



CITY 5 EDUCATION CORNERSTONE OF CIVILISED SOCIETY: YOGI

OPINION 6 ANOTHER SURPRISE REGIME CHANGE IN NEIGHBOURHOOD

WORLD 10 ISRAEL RECOVERS BODIES OF 6 HOSTAGES FROM GAZA

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

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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

Terming 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.

Continued on Page 8

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.

Continued on Page 8

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-garden 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.

Continued on Page 8

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.

Continued on Page 8

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.

Continued on Page 8

Settle old cases by running campaign: Dr Dube

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Chairman of the Board of Revenue (BoR) Uttar Pradesh, Dr Rajneesh Dube inspected Pindra tehsil on Tuesday and gave necessary guidelines to the officers. Dube said that Pindra tehsil should be developed as an ideal tehsil and wall paintings should be done on all the walls on which the image of Kashi should be seen.

He directed the sub-divisional magistrate (SDM) to recover revenue by making a list of big



Chairman Board of Revenue Rajneesh Dube inspecting Pindra tehsil in Varanasi on Tuesday.

defaulters. During the inspection, Dr Dube first saw the process of settlement of revenue cases in the SDM court. The BoR chief also checked the record of certificates and inspected the lock-up. He instructed the officers concerned to settle old cases by running a campaign. He looked at the details recorded in the service books of the employees. He inspected the archives and SDM office and thoroughly checked the postal register, guard file and registered land related documents and other

files and matched them with the records. Divisional Commissioner (DC) Kaushal Raj Sharma and District Magistrate (DM) S Rajalingam were also present during the inspection. During his visit, Dr Dube also planted a sapling along with DC and DM. On the occasion, Additional District Magistrate (ADM/Administration), ADM (Finance/Revenue), sub-divisional magistrate (SDM) Pindra, tehsildar, naib tehsildars and other officers were also present.

Ganga continues to rise, poses flood threat

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The continuous rise in the water level of Ganga river has posed a flood threat in several low-lying areas and increased the worries of the residents of many localities on both sides of river Varuna, once again. Just a few days ago when the Ganga was close to the warning level of 70.262 metres many localities along the Varuna river like Saraiya and Salarpur had already faced flood and residents were forced to shift to relief camps. They are now facing similar flood threat again as whenever the Ganga crosses 69 metres mark, the Varuna river starts reverse flow from its confluence point near Adi Keshav Ghat in the northern parts of the city.

As per the report of Middle Ganga Division-III of Central Water Commission (CWC) at 8 am on Tuesday the Ganga was recorded at 68.26 metres

and it continued to rise right from upstream Prayagraj and Mirzapur. As the Ganga was constant at Phaphamau, it indicates that the water is mainly coming from Yamuna side as the river was recorded rising at Prayagraj in upstream and Ghazipur and Ballia in downstream during the day. In the city, Ganga water already entered the famous Sheela Mata Mandir at Old Dasawamedh Ghat forcing the devotees to reach the temple through the water. Most of the 'chowki' sites of pandas have been submerged in the water. Dozens of low-lying temples located at the internationally famous 84-odd ghats were either submerged in the water fully or partially. The people are facing a lot of problems in cremating the bodies at Manikarnika and Harishchandra ghats. Regular Ganga Aarti and other programme venues at

Dashawamedh, Assi and Namoo ghats have been shifted. Elsewhere, the situation of flood in downstream is turning grim especially in UP-Bihar border district of Purvanchal (eastern UP) Ballia as the river is flowing above the danger mark for the second time during this rainy season and is rising at a speed of 20 mm per hour. It was recorded at 57.89 metres against the red mark of 57.615 metres and it is expected that the level will be at 58.3 metres by Wednesday morning. The all-time high record in Ballia was reported at 60.39 metres on August 25, 2016. In downstream Ghazipur, the river continued to rise by 10 mm per hour and was recorded at 61.39 metres against the warning level of 62.10 metres. In upstream Mirzapur, the river was at 73.66 metres against the warning level of 76.724 metres.

CRB reviews preparations for Kumbh Mela

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Chairperson of Railway Board (CRB) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Jaya Verma Sinha inspected Prayagraj Rambagh, Jhansi and Ganga Bridge Number 111 of Varanasi Division of North Eastern Railway (NER) to review preparations for Kumbh Mela-2025. Prior to this, she also inspected Prayagraj Junction, Phaphamau Junction, Prayag Junction and Prayagraj Sangam stations. In the same sequence, she also obtained information about the crowd management plan from the control tower installed there. In her inspection, senior officers including General Manager (GM) of North Central Railway (NCR) Upendra Chandra Joshi, GM of Northern Railway (NR) Shobhan Choudhury, GM of North Eastern Railway (NER) Saumya Mathur, Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) NCR Prayagraj, Himanshu Badoni, DRM NR Lucknow SM Sharma and DRM Varanasi Vineet Kumar Srivastava were also present. Devotees coming during Kumbh Mela-2025 will travel from Prayagraj Junction, Prayagraj Chheoki, Naini, Prayagraj Junction and Subedarganj, Prayagraj Rambagh, Jhansi, Prayagraj Junction, Phaphamau Junction, railway stations. During the



CRB Jaya Verma Sinha, along with NER GM Saumya Mathur and DRM Varanasi VK Srivastava inspecting Kumbh Mela preparations at Prayagraj Rambagh station on Tuesday.

Maha Kumbh. Keeping this in mind, the infrastructure of Prayagraj and nearby railway stations is being strengthened. New underpasses and overbridges are also being constructed so that passengers do not face any kind of inconvenience.

During the inspection, the CRB, along with NER GM Saumya Mathur, inspected the works and action plan to be done for the convenience of passengers in the upcoming Maha Kumbh-2025 fair to be held at Sangam in Prayagraj and saw the progress of the work. In this sequence, she inspected Prayagraj Rambagh and Jhansi stations of NER and inspected additional shelters, traffic plan, pedestrian overbridge, restrooms, toilet centers, booking counters, food stalls, water booths, electric lighting system, announcements, CCTV cameras and control room for monitoring, medical booth and security post for the convenience of the estimated passengers coming to the upcoming Kumbh Mela and expressed happiness over the work done.

She understood the work plan of the remaining development works through the map and directed the concerned to complete all the work with full quality within the stipulated time frame with some necessary improvements.

Sadbhavana Diwas observed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Sadbhavana Diwas was observed at Varanasi Division of North Eastern Railway (NER) Office here on Tuesday. On the occasion, Additional Divisional Railway Manager (Operations) Rajesh Kumar Singh administered the oath to the officers and employees working at the Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) office. The ADRM appealed to all to work for the emotional unity and goodwill of all Indians without discriminating on the basis of caste, community, region, religion or language in their field of work and resolve their all types of differences through dialogue and constitutional means without resorting to violence. On the occasion, Senior Divisional Personnel Officer Sameer Paul, Senior Divisional Finance Manager Rajesh Kumar, Divisional Engineer General Prem Prakash Kujur, Assistant Personnel Officer Ramesh Upadhyay and many other heads of different departments were present. Earlier, SDPO Sameer Paul said that Sadbhavana Diwas is celebrated every year on 20th August in India in the memory of the former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

Blood analyser inaugurated

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Former UP Minister and Varanasi City South MLA Dr Neelkanth Tiwari on Tuesday inaugurated the fully automatic blood analyser machine at Community Health Centre (CHC), Durgakund. This machine will help in testing kidney, liver, cholesterol, heart related diseases. Addressing the people present on the occasion, Dr Tiwari said that all the related tests will be done free of cost. "The patients will get a lot of benefit from the installation of the said machine. Along with free treatment, there will be a lot of time saving as well. A QR code will be issued relative to the blood sample of every patient. After the completion of the investigation, the report will reach the patient's mobile immediately", said the MLA, adding that soon such arrangements are



planned to be made at other health centres in the area as well. After the inauguration, the MLA visited the entire campus and checked the quality of the construction work being done there. During his inspection, the MLA directed the officers concerned to build a room for medicine storage in the vacant space. Dr Tiwari also planted a tree under the 'Ek Ped

Maa Ke Naam' campaign. On the occasion, Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Sandeep Chaudhary, corporator Akshay Singh, Bharat Ji, Ratandev along with Superintendent and ACMO Dr Nikunj Kumar Verma, Deputy CMO Dr HC Maurya, Dr Saurobh Pratap Singh, Dr Sarika Rai, Dr SK Singh, pharmacist Ramakant Tripathi and other staff were present.

Mason killed under mysterious circumstances

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A mason was allegedly killed under mysterious circumstances in Phaphund police station area of Auraiya on Monday evening. He was identified as Sanjiv Kumar of Dakhlipur village and engaged in construction work in the house of KP Yadav of Umarsana in Kakor village. Wife Sridevi alleged that Yadav had not paid any money to her husband for the past one month. On Monday afternoon after receiving a call to collect his money he immediately left. When he did not return for a long time she

sent her son Deependra was sent to call his father back. When Deependra went to Yadav's place, the latter informed that he would himself drop his father by car after some time. Around 9.30 pm some car-borne people arrived at her house and returned after leaving her husband in the outside verandah. She later found her husband dead and lodged named a first information report (FIR) against four persons with the police alleging their involvement in the killing of her husband. Police have started a probe in the matter.

Miscreants loot couple

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Three bike-borne miscreants looted cash, jewellery and mobile phones, all worth Rs.2.53 lakh from a couple on Lucknow-Bangermau road in Unnao late on Monday night. On protest the miscreants beat up the man with a brick and caused serious head injury. Thereafter, they looted Rs 3,000 cash, jewellery worth around Rs. 2.50 lakh and mobile phones from the couple and escaped from there. A car-borne passer-by took the couple to the community health centre (CHC) and informed the kin of the victims and police about the incident. Immediately Superintendent of Police (SP), circle officer (CO) and force from two police stations rushed to the spot and recorded the statement of

the victims. Rohit (28) son of Ramtej of Kudwakheda village in Asiwan police area, Unnao, along with wife Jyoti (23) had gone to his in-laws in Purwa under Makhi police station on Monday on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan. After tying Rakhi, the couple was returning home around 8.30 pm. Suddenly ahead of their village turn, on Lucknow-Bangermau road three bike-borne miscreants looted cash, jewellery and mobile phones from the couple. On failing to regain consciousness Rohit was referred to the Trauma Centre in Lucknow. SP Sidharth Shanker Meena said a probe was on in the matter and claimed that the case would be worked out soon. PAINTER COMMITS SUICIDE: A painter committed suicide by hanging himself

from a tree in Bithoor police station area late Monday night. He was found hanging from the neem tree in a field situated about 400 metres away from his house on Tuesday morning. On getting information police rushed to the spot and carried out investigation. Tikra outpost incharge Anil Malik got the body identified by his kin as Shiv Singh Kamal (26) of Naurangabad Colony. Police sent the body for an autopsy. Elder brother Rahul said Shiv Singh was engaged in painting job. He had left the house on Monday afternoon. On failing to return till late evening, friends and relatives were contacted who also failed to provide any clue about him. On Tuesday morning, farmers went to work in the fields found Shiv Singh hanging from a neem tree.

BHU takes initiative for new faculty

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

In its commitment to fostering institutional excellence, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) is advancing its recruitment of top-tier faculty talent. A comprehensive recruitment process is underway to fill the vacant faculty positions comprising assistant professors, associate professors and professors, of which about 100 have already been offered appointments. The university is dedicated to ensuring a smooth integration of these new members into its academic community. A seamless acclimatisation of the new recruits into the organisation is a crucial process that goes a long way in developing a healthy work culture as well as enhancing engagement and improving productivity. Aiming to achieve this, the university has taken this significant

step by appointing two coordinators under the Faculty Recruitment and Assistance Programme. The decision has been taken at the initiative of Vice-Chancellor (V-C) Prof Sudhir Kumar Jain who has been prioritising developing a culture that empowers one and all and drives members of BHU to strive as a team in achieving organisational goals. Prof Sandip Kumar from the Department of Pathology, Institute of Medical Sciences, will serve as the coordinator for Medical Sciences, while Prof Ajay Kumar from the Department of Physics, Institute of Science, has been appointed coordinator for the rest of the university. The coordinators will play a pivotal role in the acclimatisation of new faculty members. They will facilitate orientation programmes, provide guidance

on academic and research opportunities both within and outside BHU and help in ensuring timely access to essential resources such as office space, laboratory facilities and IT support. Additionally, they will facilitate inter-departmental interactions and networking opportunities to foster collaboration and build meaningful professional relationships. A crucial part of their role will be to mentor new recruits, assisting them in navigating their teaching and research responsibilities, overcoming initial challenges and connecting with resources for research proposal writing, funding opportunities and administrative support. The coordinators have been tasked with establishing a feedback mechanism to track the progress and integration of new faculty members.

Ministers offer prayers at Sarang Nath Temple

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Two local UP Ministers of State (Independent Charge) Ravindra Jaiswal and Dr Dayashankar Mishra 'Dayal' offered prayers at Sarang Nath Mahadev Temple on the last Monday in the Shravan month and planted saplings in temple premises in Sarnath. During this auspicious month, more than 53.84 lakh devotees took blessings of Lord Shiva visiting Dwadasa Jyotirlinga Kashi Vishwanath Temple (KVT), according to Chief Executive Officer of Shri Kashi Vishwanath Temple Trust Vishwa Bhushan Mishra. Though on some Mondays of this 29 days long month from July 22 to August 19, the number of devotees was nearly three lakhs, an average of over 1.85 lakh devotees had visited the KVT daily and this figure was over 1.64 lakh on the fifth and last Monday which was also the last day of Shravan. During the day, Kashi kept resonating with the traditional slogan of 'Har Har Mahadev' and due to rush as the day was also celebrated as Raksha Bandhan heavy traffic jam was seen. Many people missed their trains at Pt Deen Dayal Upadhyay Junction (DDU), popularly known as Mughalsarai, as their vehicles were stranded in traffic jam. Under the guidance of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath who

himself visited KVT to offer prayers twice during the Shravan month, the event related to Shravan in this holy city was completed successfully. For this on the very first day of Shravan, the CM had reached Kashi and saw the situation and gave necessary instructions. After this, the administration had prepared a fool proof plan. Its benefit was seen in making crowd management and other arrangements smoothly. While performing the duty of respecting the faith of the devotees, security and smooth darshan, the Yogi government successfully completed the Shravan month. During this time, the administration, police, commandos, traffic department, team of doctors, disaster management, fire brigade, NDRF and water police team remained constantly alert. To avoid rain and sun, arrangements of German hanger, drinking water, wet carpet, coolers, drinking water, wet snacks etc continued in Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham (Corridor) throughout the month. On the last Monday, elaborate security arrangements were made and to maintain law and order, the devotees were checked at many places through metal detectors. Senior administrative and police officers were present there to keep watch on the stock of situation in KVC premises. All the activities were also watched through various CCTV cameras. Right from the early wee hours after Mangla Aarti, the devotees started thronging the tem-

ple and there were continuous lines of devotees on both sides of the temple including Maidagin and Godowlia as well as Lalita Ghat. For the conveniences of the devotees, at six places big LED screens were installed to display the activities of garbhagriha (sanctum sanctorum) as the devotees were not allowed to touch the Shivaling and they offered jalabhishek through big metal structure from outside the garbhagriha. Apart from KVT, lakhs of devotees also offered prayers at several other famous temples located in the city as well as its outskirts. Maximum rush was seen at Markandey Mahadev located near the confluence of rivers Ganga and Gomti at Kaithi. Besides, there was also heavy rush of devotees at all famous temples, including Mahamritunjaya Mahadev (Daranganar), Gauri Kedareswar (Kedar Ghat), Jogeshwar Mahadev (Ishwargangi), Omkleshwar Mahadev (Chittanpura), Teel Bhandeshwar (Pandey Haveli), Sarang Nath Mahadev (Sarnath), Vishwanath Temple in Banaras Hindu University (BHU) premises, Shool Tankeshwar Mahadev and many others in the city areas. In the outskirts, a heavy rush of devotees was also seen at all the Shiva temples located on Panchkoshi Parikarma Marg including Karmdeshwar Mahadev, Bhim Chandi, Rameshwar Mahadev, Paach Pandev and Kapildhara.

Stress on promoting greenery

Kanpur (PNS): On the occasion of Raksha Bandhan, Director of Goldiee Group Sudeep Goenka planted a sapling on the Kohna police station campus.



Goldiee Group Director Sudeep Goenka planting sapling at Kohna police station.

After planting the sapling, he also appealed to the people that it is their duty to conserve plants after plantation to eradicate pollution and promote greenery in the city. Station House Officer (SHO) Kohna along with staff members were present on the occasion. TAEKWONDO CHAMPIONSHIP: The Uttar Pradesh team emerged runner-up in the two-day national taekwondo championship for sub-junior and cadets (boys/girls) categories which concluded here on Sunday. Maharashtra emerged the winner while Assam won the third place. President, Indian Taekwondo Association, Namdeo and treasurer Rajat Aditya Dixit felicitated the winner and runners-up with trophy and prizes. The UP team was runner-up by winning nine gold, 10 silver and seven bronze medals.

FPA to observe Kaustubh Jayanti

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Faculty of Performing Arts (FPA), Banaras Hindu University (BHU) will celebrate its 75th year with great enthusiasm as Kaustubh Jayanti Year. The stalwart artistes namely Pt Omkarnath Thakur (Padma Shri), Pt Balwant Rai Bhat (Padma Shri), Prof Prem Lata Sharma, Pt Lalmani Mishra, Dr N Rajam (Padma Bhushan), Pt Chitranjan Jyotishi, Pt Rajeshwar Acharya (Padma Shri), Prof Pt Ritwik Sanyal (Padma Shri), Dr Soma Ghosh (Padma Shri) are few of the gems who are the pride of this faculty. The faculty is in the continuous process of establishing its excellence in the field of Indian classical music.

Dr Singh: Take preventive steps for protection from diseases

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

MD Internal Medicine, Regency Hospital, Dr Durga Prasad Singh, said, "During the monsoon season, taking preventive measures is crucial to protect yourself from common diseases. It is vital to be proactive about your health by maintaining good hygiene, eating a balanced diet rich in nutrients and staying mindful of your surroundings. Simple actions like washing your hands regularly, drinking boiled water and keeping your environment clean can significantly reduce the risk of infections. By being cautious and informed, you can enjoy the monsoon without compromising your health. Remember, early medical intervention is key in managing any symptoms that arise, so do not hesitate to seek professional help when needed." The monsoon also brings a spike in mosquito-borne diseases like dengue fever. This condition can be extremely painful and life-threatening, often requiring hospital care. Symptoms include high fever, headache, nausea, vomiting, rash and muscle and joint pains. Immediate medical attention is necessary if one experiences vomiting, dizziness or breathing difficulties. Malaria remains a significant health concern during the rainy season, caused by the bite of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes. Symptoms include fever, chills, headache, nau-

sea, vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhoea, muscle or joint pain, fatigue, rapid breathing, and cough. It is imperative to seek immediate medical help if severe symptoms are present. Typhoid fever, another serious concern, is transmitted through contaminated food and water. This bacterial infection is more prevalent in areas with poor hygiene practices. Symptoms include high fever, headache, stomach pain, diarrhoea or constipation and weakness. Prompt medical consultation is essential if typhoid is suspected. To stay healthy during the monsoon, it is recommended to consume a nutritious diet rich in green vegetables and fruits to bolster immune system. Opting for fresh, homemade food and staying hydrated with plenty of boiled water is crucial. Good hygiene practices, such as washing hands before meals and avoiding touching your face with unwashed hands, are vital. Keeping home and surroundings clean to deter mosquitoes, using mosquito repellents and wearing full-sleeved clothing are also recommended. Additionally, vaccination against typhoid fever is advised, especially for those traveling to high-risk areas and avoiding crowded places can also help reduce the risk of viral infections. GIRL HANGS SELF: A teenaged girl committed suicide by hanging herself in Baijapur village under Sadh police station area late on Monday afternoon. She had differ-

ences with brother for the past few days and was upset after he refused to get rakhi tied by her on Raksha Bandhan. On her insistence, brother scolded her and went to maternal grandparents house with mother. On return late in the evening, he found her hanging and informed the police. Shobhit (20) of Baijapur said for the past few days he had some minor differences with younger sister Shubhi. On Monday, he had to go to his maternal grandparents house in Gangapur village, Amauli (Fatehpur) with mother. In the afternoon when he was leaving with mother, Shubhi asked him to get rakhi tied by her. Shobhit agreed to get it tied on return. On Shubhi's insistence, Shobhit scolded her and proceeded with the mother. At that time, Shubhi's elder sister was also present in the house. Thereafter, upset after being scolded by brother, Shubhi went to the room on the rooftop and hanged herself. When Shobhit and mother returned late in the evening, they found Shubhi hanging. Ghatampur ACP Ranjit Kumar Singh said Shobhit had informed about his sister committing suicide. The body had been sent for autopsy and probe was on in the matter. After death of his father Satyaveer last year, Shobhit was carrying out the livelihood of family by doing a private job. At the time of incident, his grandmother and elder sister were present in the house.

Education is cornerstone of civilised society, says Yogi

CM launches UP's first 'Road to School' project

PNS ■ GORAKHPUR

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday said that education is the most crucial achievement for any capable and strong nation. "Education is the cornerstone of a civilised and capable society, and a strong nation. Without it, the realisation of human values and the fulfillment of life's necessities are unimaginable," Yogi said while inaugurating the state's first 'Road to School' project under the 'Nipun Bharat Mission' in Chargaon block of Gorakhpur. He highlighted the pivotal role of education in fostering self-reliance, noting, "When individuals are self-dependent, society and the nation also become self-reliant. In such a scenario, there is no reason why India cannot become the world's greatest power."



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath during the inauguration of the first phase of 'Road to School' project in Goarkhpur on Tuesday. PTI

While discussing the importance of education, Yogi noted that efforts to make education accessible to all have been a priority since ancient times, with the Gurukul system serving as a key inspiration. He cited Takshila, Nalanda, Vikramshila, Kashi, and Kanchipuram as renowned centres of learning and teaching in ancient India. The chief minister also acknowledged that although significant efforts were made to strengthen the field of education after India gained independence, much work remains to be done to fully realise the nation's educational potential. Yogi highlighted the significant improvements in the state's council schools over the past seven years, attributing these changes to the government's dedicated efforts. He pointed out that before 2017, dropout rates were a major issue, with many students failing to attend school regularly or not continuing their education beyond certain grades. "A large number of enrolled children did not come to schools, and many did not advance to Class VI after Class V, or to Class IX after Class VIII," he noted. The government's 'School Chalo Abhiyan' placed a strong emphasis on the role of teachers, which led to a steady resolution of this problem, he added. He further said that since the launch of the 'School Chalo Abhiyan', the number of stu-

dents in UP's council schools has seen a significant increase, with 50-60 lakh new enrollments after 2017. "Despite the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic over the past two years, the number of students in these schools has risen from 1.34 crore to 1.92 crore," he pointed out. The chief minister emphasized that by securing a bright future for the children, the government is laying the foundation for a prosperous future for India. Emphasising the government's commitment to strengthening school education through resources and incentives, Yogi stated that a significant number of schools have been upgraded under 'Operation Kayakalp' with the support of public representatives and prominent citizens. "Smart classes have been established and equipped with excellent furniture and other facilities. To encourage attendance, the government provides Rs 1,200 to the parents of every child for uniforms, books, bags, shoes, socks, and more," he noted. The chief minister also mentioned that Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas are being enriched with resources to support girls' education.

"Additionally, Atal Residential Schools have been opened at all divisional headquarters to offer free education to the children of workers, and day schools will soon be launched in 57 districts. To further strengthen the education sector, PM SHRI and Mukhyamantri Composite Schools are being established," he said. Yogi emphasised the importance of collective efforts in achieving the vision of 'Nipun Uttar Pradesh' through the Nipun Bharat Mission, in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision. The chief minister described the 'Road to School' project as an extension of the 'School Chalo Abhiyan'. In this initiative, a resource person, supported by a team working in a pyramid structure, is responsible for bringing children to school, ensuring their regular attendance, and monitoring their education, health, sports, and artistic development. "The 'Road to School' programme adopts an innovative approach by incorporating practical examples into teaching. This programme is designed with a strong emphasis on achieving 100% enrollment, ensuring regular class

attendance, and facilitating smooth transitions to higher grades. The 'Road to School' is a crucial component of the broader initiatives aimed at enhancing the overall quality of education," he remarked. The chief minister expressed gratitude to Ashok Leyland Limited and its implementation partner, the Learning Link Foundation, for launching the project in collaboration with the Basic Education department. Yogi announced that the first phase of the project will include all 78 council schools (primary, upper primary, and composite) in the Chargaon block, benefiting 17,781 students. The second phase will extend to 90 council schools in the Bhatat block, where 16,434 students will receive support. The project aims to boost student enrollment in council schools, reduce dropout rates, foster a greater interest in studies, provide health care, and promote advancement in sports and skills. The chief minister urged teachers to recognise their role as the architects of a new India. He stressed the importance of teachers remaining up-to-date with diverse areas of knowledge to effectively educate the next generation. He urged teachers to be well-versed not only in their respective subjects but also in their social responsibilities. "It will enable you to nurture capable and responsible citizens. By continuously updating knowledge, teachers will be able to impart essential skills to students, who will, in turn, appreciate their efforts in shaping their futures," Yogi said. MLA Mahendrapal Singh and Principal Secretary (Basic Education) Dr S Sundaram also spoke at the event. Vice President of Ashok Leyland Foundation Shashi Kumar expressed his gratitude. Meanwhile, Yogi visited various stalls set up by the Basic Education department, Bal Vikas evam Pusthakar department, and others at the event. He engaged with the children, offering encouragement and support. He also participated in the Annaprashan ceremony, and performed the 'Godhbhara' ritual for pregnant women. Later, the chief minister honoured outstanding students from Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas.

Yogi expresses grief over demise of RSS leader

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday expressed grief over the demise of former all-India coordinator of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and former provincial pracharak of Awadh Balkrishna Tripathi, and paid tributes to the departed soul. Tripathi, who was admitted to Ram Manohar Lohia Medical Institute of Medical Sciences in Lucknow on Friday due to illness, passed away on Tuesday morning at the age of around 88 years. His body will be in Bharti Bhawan for the last 'darshan' from 7:30 am to 10 am. The last rites will be performed at Bhairav Ghat in Kanpur. Taking to X, Yogi wrote: "The passing of @RSSorg's senior Pracharak and former state Pracharak of Awadh, Shri Balkrishna ji, is deeply saddening. I offer my humble tribute." "May Lord Shri Ram grant the departed soul a place at His feet and provide strength to the bereaved RSS volunteers and family members in this time of immense sorrow. Om Shanti," he added.

CM: Incidents of Ayodhya, Gontinagar, Kannauj reflect 'nawab brand' of SP

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday referred to the alleged involvement of Samajwadi Party (SP) workers in some incidents of rape and molestation and said the incidents of Ayodhya, Gontinagar and Kannauj reflect the 'nawab brand' of the Samajwadi Party. This is the real identity of the SP, he added. Adityanath was apparently referring to the recent incident in Kannauj, where former SP block head Nawab Singh Yadav allegedly raped a minor on the pretext of giving her a job, the arrest of an SP leader in the alleged rape of a minor in Ayodhya and the case of molestation in Lucknow's Gontinagar during rain. However, the SP distanced itself from Nawab Singh Yadav, saying he was not an active member of the party. He said, "The incidents of Ayodhya, Gontinagar and Kannauj are the 'nawab brand' of the Samajwadi Party." Chief Minister Adityanath attacked the SP fiercely while interacting with party workers in the workshop of BJP membership campaign 2024 organised at the Indira Gandhi Pratishthan here. According to an official statement issued here, targeting SP chief Akhilesh Yadav, he



said, "Doctors and women are agitated over the anarchy in Kolkata, but the SP chief is protecting the rapists and the Kolkata (West Bengal) government." Regarding the membership campaign, the chief minister said that 200 members have to be joined at every booth. For this, workers should go to different sections of society in villages and make a list of every section, including writers, litterateurs, social reformers, farmers, youths, and retired soldiers. Adityanath asked the party workers to go to slums and Dalit colonies and listen to them and make them aware of central and state schemes. Adityanath said the first phase of the campaign will run from

September 1 to 25 and in the second phase, the campaign will run from October 1 to 15. After October 15, the campaign for active membership will run till October 31. Adityanath said, "The scene of political instability was seen in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Its murmurs were seen in Indian politics six months before the Lok Sabha elections. Rumours were being spread on social media. This points towards conspiracies to stop the BJP and our ideology. If there was no able leadership in the country, they would have succeeded in creating instability. The chief minister said, "The BJP is necessary for political stability in the country."

AKY: 'Lateral entry' conspiracy succumbed to PDA unity

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Tuesday said the conspiracy of denying reservation in UPSC appointments through backdoor lateral entry finally succumbed to the unity of PDA and the government had to withdraw its decision. However, he said the plan exposed the anti-reservation face of BJP. "BJP's conspiracies are no longer succeeding; this is a huge victory of awakening and consciousness for PDA. Under these circumstances, the PDA postpones the call for agitation against lateral recruitment by the Samajwadi Party, starting from October 2, and also pledges that it will not allow any such move to succeed in the future and will strongly oppose it. The way the public started joining our October 2 movement, this is also a victory for that unity," he said in a statement on Tuesday.



Meanwhile, Akhilesh said that if the officials had not committed dishonesty at the behest of the UP chief minister in the Lok Sabha elections, the Samajwadi Party and INDIA bloc would have won more than 50 seats in the state. He claimed that the BJP government betrayed the farmers, youth and businessmen and made false promises to the

public. "The BJP government deliberately kept leaking the papers, so that jobs and reservation could not be given. Businesses have been ruined, thanks to the inconsistent GST, even as inflation and unemployment are at their peak," he added. The SP president said that corruption had broken all records in the BJP government; there was corruption in every department and the budget had been looted. "The law and order situation in the state has collapsed. The chief minister's claim of zero tolerance to crime and corruption has no basis. The situation of Uttar Pradesh is very bad in terms of crime against women. The victims and the poor are not getting justice. No one can get justice in the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government and there is disappointment in every class," Akhilesh said. "People now want freedom from the BJP and it is certain

that it will lose in the upcoming assembly by-elections," the SP chief added. "It's only when Uttar Pradesh is free from BJP that the people will get freedom from injustice, oppression, poverty, unemployment and inflation," he claimed. Akhilesh said that even after the big defeat in the Lok Sabha elections, some Bharatiya Janata Party leaders were not desisting from boasting. "The Bharatiya Janata Party leaders and the government have nothing left but to make false allegations and resort to rhetoric against the opposition. Instead of using power in the public interest, the BJP is misusing it," he said, adding: "The Bharatiya Janata Party is continuously trying to defame the Samajwadi Party. In fact, the BJP is disheartened by the Lok Sabha election defeat. The public will teach a lesson to the BJP by defeating it badly in the coming by-elections."

CM holds Janata Darshan

Gorakhpur (PNS): Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath instructed officers to take strict legal action against those who attempt to displace the underprivileged. He stressed the importance of safeguarding the land rights of the poor, noting that those still awaiting their pucca houses should be provided accommodations under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana or the Chief Minister Awas Yojana. CM Yogi issued these directives on Tuesday during a 'Janata Darshan' held at the Mahant Digvijaynath Smriti Bhawan auditorium in Gorakhnath Temple complex where he addressed the grievances of around 300 people. The chief minister interacted with the attendees, receiving their petitions, and listening to their concerns. After hearing each case, he promptly provided instructions to the officers concerned to ensure a timely, fair, and satisfactory resolution. In response to land-grabbing complaints, Yogi issued firm



instructions to officials, saying: "Those who illegally seize land and displace the vulnerable must face the strictest legal action without exception." He emphasised that the government is committed to ensuring justice for all and fostering prosperity. The chief minister called for decisive action in revenue and law enforcement matters, stressing that public welfare must always be a top priority and that every grievance

should be resolved promptly. Many people attended the Janata Darshan, seeking financial assistance for serious illnesses. The CM assured them that nobody's medical care would be halted due to a lack of funds. He directed officials to expedite estimation of the required funds for the advanced treatment of the applicants and submit it to the government promptly so that it could be released at the earliest.

Maya backs nationwide shutdown against apex court's ruling

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Supreme Court's recent ruling allowing states to create sub-categories within Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) reservations, as well as to implement a creamy layer within these reservations, has sparked significant controversy. In response, Dalit organisations, supported by Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) leader Mayawati, have called for a nationwide shutdown on August 21. BSP national coordinator Akash Anand announced that BSP flags will be prominently displayed during the protests. He criticised the Supreme Court's decision, which he said has incited considerable anger among SC/ST communities. Anand emphasised the need for a firm response to what he described as an attack on their rights, despite the community's general peacefulness. BSP workers will participate in the protests and submit memorandums to Sub-Divisional Magistrates (SDMs) in various regions. This move represents a significant shift for the BSP, which has not engaged in large-scale street protests for decades. Anand's announcement suggests a strategic effort by the BSP to regain political momentum and rebuild its organisational strength. The party aims to use the reservation issue to strengthen its base among SC/ST voters and address concerns about threats to their rights. Historically, BSP founder Kanshi Ram and Mayawati focused on building their political base through community outreach and strategic alliances rather than street protests. However, with declining support and poor electoral performance, the BSP's decision to support the shutdown reflects an urgent effort to rejuvenate its political influence and address its diminishing voter base. The party's involvement in the August 21 protests and its criticism of the Supreme Court's ruling highlight a critical moment for the BSP as it seeks to reclaim its position and address growing concerns among its core supporters. Meanwhile,

BSP chief expresses concern over rising unemployment

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) leader Mayawati expressed concern on Tuesday over rising unemployment and the growing economic disparity in India. In a post on X, Mayawati questioned the lack of job opportunities despite claims of economic growth. She criticised the widening gap between the rich and poor, attributing it to the uneven distribution of wealth and its detrimental effect on public and national interests. She challenged the validity of reported development rates, asking why job creation has not kept pace with these claims. Mayawati also criticised the Uttar Pradesh government for "misleading advertisements" about job creation. She described the state's job claims as empty promises, highlighting that the reported 6.5 lakh government jobs are insufficient for a population of around 25 crore. Additionally, she pointed out the poor state of permanent positions at the central level, with many remaining unfilled. She further condemned the notion that minimal self-employment or low-wage work could be considered a solution to unemployment, emphasising that such measures do not address the root of the issue.

Rahul flays police for Dalit's murder in Rae Bareilly

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, Rahul Gandhi, condemned the murder of a 22-year-old Dalit man in his constituency, Rae Bareilly. Gandhi criticised the police for their inaction against the alleged mastermind behind the crime. During a brief visit to Rae Bareilly on Tuesday, Gandhi told reporters that the superintendent of police (SP) had not addressed the key suspects, which has intensified public outrage. Gandhi, who met with the victim's family, outlined the circumstances of the murder.



Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi speaks to the media after meeting the family of a Dalit man who was recently shot dead in Salon area, during his visit to Rae Bareilly on Tuesday. PTI

According to the victim's mother, her son, a barber, frequently had customers who did not pay for their haircuts. On a recent occasion, after requesting payment, the victim's brother was allegedly murdered in retaliation. Gandhi stated, "The people gathered here seek justice because a Dalit youth has been killed, and his family has been threatened with no action taken. The SP has not acted against the mastermind, leading to public anger. I want everyone in Uttar Pradesh to receive respect and justice, which is why I am here. We will not back down until justice is served to the family," he said. The victim's mother explained that her son, a barber, had been visited by around 6-7 individuals who did not pay. When he asked for payment during their last visit, his brother was killed. "This is clear injustice and must be addressed. The court will decide the punishment, but I will apply pressure and not retreat," he added.

However, Gandhi chose not to comment on a separate case involving the rape and murder of a doctor in Kolkata, focusing instead on the local issue in Rae Bareilly. Earlier, president of the Uttar Pradesh Congress Ajay Rai said that Gandhi arrived at the Fursatganj airport in Amethi around 1 pm before proceeding to Nasirabad in Rae Bareilly, where the murder occurred. Gandhi was accompanied by key Congress leaders, including Ajay Rai, Avinash Pandey, and Rajya Sabha member Pramod Tiwari. After his visit, Gandhi experienced technical issues with his chartered flight and travelled by road to Lucknow before catching a flight to Delhi. The incident involved the alleged shooting of Anuj Pasi, a 22-year-old Dalit, on August 11 in Bhuwalpur Sinsi village following a dispute with local residents. According to the police, at least six suspects have been arrested in connection with the case.

Yogi govt achieves 101% of its GSDP target

Lucknow (PNS): In its mission to transform Uttar Pradesh into a one trillion-dollar economy, the Yogi government has surpassed expectations by achieving 101% of its GSDP target across various sectors. Notably, the transport, storage, and communication sectors have recorded the highest GSDP of 129%. The state has also recorded significant growth in agriculture, mining, construction, transport, and real estate sectors. These accomplishments, highlighted in a report based on data from the Union Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, reinforce the government's determination to make Uttar Pradesh an indus-

trial powerhouse. In the financial year 2023-24, significant progress was recorded in the Gross State Value Added (GSVA) across multiple sectors. The agriculture and allied sectors achieved Rs 5.98 lakh crore, surpassing the target of Rs 5.85 lakh crore, reaching 102%. The mining and excavation sector excelled with Rs 0.30 lakh crore, exceeding its target of Rs 0.26 lakh crore and reaching 115%. Similarly, the construction sector recorded Rs 2.79 lakh crore, surpassing the target of Rs 2.48 lakh crore, reaching 112%. The transport, storage, and communication sector experienced the highest growth, achieving Rs 1.98 lakh crore, or 129% of its target of Rs 1.53 lakh crore. The real

estate and housing sector achieved 102% of its target for the financial year 2023-24. The target was Rs 3.23 lakh crore, and the sector achieved Rs 3.29 lakh crore. Additionally, the government's efforts led to promising results across other sectors, including manufacturing, energy, trade, repairs, hotels and restaurants, financial services, public administration, education, and health. The impact of initiatives to enhance the ease of doing business under Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is now evident in the strengthening of industry and trade. The secondary sector, in particular, has seen significant gains, achieving 104% of its target, while the primary sector has grown by 103%.



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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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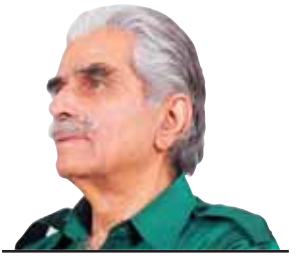
PICTALK



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

RANJAN DIMRI

Another surprise regime change in neighbourhood



ASHOK K MEHTA

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

Prime Minister Narendra Modi mentioned in his Independence Day speech that India is worried about developments in Bangladesh, especially about the safety of Hindus and other minorities there. Promptly Professor Yunus head of Caretaker Administration called Modi to reassure him of their safety. The soft coup in Dhaka, the fourth in 53 years is almost wholly student-driven following Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina losing touch with her people and mounting economic distress. The killing of 200 and more protestors, 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 desecrated. 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



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

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 Arivalayaam" 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 Kalaaignar 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



RIPU BAJWA

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

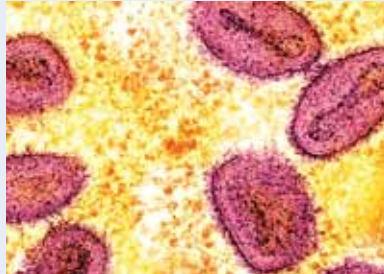


concept centred on the belief that organizations should not automatically trust anything inside or outside their perimeters and instead must verify everything trying to connect to their systems before granting access. Organizations can achieve a Zero Trust model by incorporating solutions like micro-segmentation, 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)

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 Mpox 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 on 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 adhered 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

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'.



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

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 mBtu. 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 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)

Mismatch in statements of suspects puts CBI in a fix

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Discrepancies in the statements provided by the people interrogated in the Kolkata lady doctor rape and murder case apart from several other "relevant facts" seem to have left the Central Bureau of Investigation officials in a fix. The CBI officials have come to know that a number of telephone calls and messages were sent and received by people — including senior officials of the RG Kar Medical College Hospital where the incident took place and the state administration, sources say. The officials have found that some officials of the hospital had called up some people and received a call from at least one person "who could be in the state health administration." Messages too were sent and instructions that had influenced subsequent acts of the hospital authorities were received, sources said adding such messages have been deleted from the mobile call details of the staff interrogated thus far. Among these staff is the former Principal of the Hospital Sandip Ghosh as also some

Head of the departments and senior doctors. The body of a postgraduate lady doctor of the department of chest medicine was found in a seminar room inside the hospital in the wee hours of August 8 leading to a country wide protest from the medical fraternity and the general public mostly women. "The question is who made the calls and to whom ... and what instructions were received and whether the such instructions had anything to do with the police being called at a later stage or the attempt to let the rape and murder pass off as a suicide," sources privy to the investigation process say wondering as to who directed the police to cremate the body of the victim in a hurry apparently to subvert the chance of a second postmortem. "Whether the hospital authorities were acting according to the instructions received from someone higher up ... whether the then Principal was taking instructions from anyone placed higher than him," is the question that he has evaded thus far, sources say.

Doctors refused to call off strike



SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Notwithstanding the Supreme Court order for deployment of Central Industrial Security Forces at RG Kar Medical College the striking resident doctors of the College said that they were not going to withdraw their strike anytime soon. "We welcome the Supreme Court order but are not withdrawing the strike soon ... we will discuss things on our meeting before we take a decision," said one of the agitating doctors. The junior doctors statewide have struck work since August 8 after a postgraduate lady doctor of the department of chest medicine raped and murdered inside a seminar hall of the hospital.

J&K poll: Ex-alliance partners Cong, NC exploring pre-poll ties

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Former alliance partners Congress and National Conference are expected to give a tough fight to the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) in the upcoming Assembly polls by forging a pre-poll alliance in Jammu and Kashmir. Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi and Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge are both arriving here on a two-day visit to explore the possibilities of sealing the deal with the National Conference. Meanwhile, on Tuesday, the Election Commission of India issued a notification for the first phase of polling across 24 Assembly segments on September 18. The party Chief and Rahul Gandhi are also scheduled to attend an interactive session with party Leaders, delegates, block Presidents and other senior Leaders on Wednesday to chalk out their election campaign strategy for the upcoming Assembly elections. The duo will leave for Srinagar the same evening to hold parleys with the party Leaders in the valley. A preliminary discussion has already been held between the Leaders of both parties in



Srinagar. During their visit to Srinagar on Thursday the Congress Leaders are expected to hold parleys with the top brass of the National Conference to discuss the contours of the pre-poll alliance. On Tuesday, newly appointed Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee Chief Tariq Hamid Qarra said, "We have kept our doors open to all like-minded parties that stand against the hegemony and dictatorial attitude of the BJP. To facilitate this, we have formed a committee that will establish parameters to ensure that the interests of the people of J&K and the Indian National Congress are safeguarded," he said. The National Conference and the Congress party had

contested the recently held Lok Sabha elections in alliance. The NC won two seats in the valley while Congress faced defeat on both seats in Jammu province. Scrutiny of the Lok Sabha results revealed the National Conference and the Congress party garnered majority votes from at least 41 out of 90 Assembly segments. The Bharatiya Janta Party, despite winning both the Lok Sabha seats of the Jammu region, fell short of at least 16 seats to reach the halfway mark of 45 in a 90-member legislature. The Bharatiya Janta Party polled majority votes from 29 Assembly segments of Jammu-Reasi and Udhampur-Doda Lok Sabha seats.

India, Japan review defence ties in 2+2 Ministerial dialogue

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India and Japan on Tuesday reviewed the entire spectrum of their strategic and defence ties in the 2+2 ministerial dialogue. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said in the last decade, the relationship has assumed the form of a Special Strategic and Global Partnership. "Our cooperation is today set against a larger context of a free, open and rules-based Indo-Pacific. For India, this is a natural extrapolation from our Act East policy. Indeed, the proportion of our activities and interests East of India has been steadily growing," he said. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar held talks with Japanese Minister of Defence Kihara Minoru and Minister of Foreign Affairs Yoko Kamikawa for the 3rd India-Japan 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue. Elaborating upon the ties, Jaishankar said the logic of this evolution is "our expanding interests and growing activities. As we both step forward into a

more volatile and unpredictable world, there is a need for reliable partners with whom there are substantial convergences. As a result, "we have consciously sought to facilitate each other's endeavours, comprehend each other's objectives, strengthen each other's positions and work with other nations of shared comfort. Our Strategic Partnership will continue to grow as we embrace mutuality and display sensitivity," Jaishankar said. "We mark the 10th anniversary of our Special Strategic and Global Partnership. The 2+2 must particularly focus on the steps ahead. It is two years since we last met in Tokyo. There have been many developments of consequence in the world. Our own relationship also has to factor in changes in our own capabilities and calculations." During the bilateral talks and 2+2 meeting, the Ministers reviewed the bilateral cooperation and explored new initiatives to further strengthen the engagements between the two countries. They also exchanged views on regional and global issues of mutual interest.

Govt alert on Mpox; surveillance upped, nodal centres designated

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

The threat of monkeypox (Mpox), which has spread from Central Africa to other parts of the world, is now increasing in India as well. Following reports of Mpox (a viral disease caused by the Mpox virus) positive cases in neighbouring countries Pakistan and Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK), the Centre has issued an alert, designating three hospitals in Delhi as nodal centres for Mpox while surveillance at borders and airports has been enhanced. Presently, there is no reported case of Mpox in the country. At Lady Hardinge Medical College, RML Hospital, and Safdarjung Hospital in Delhi isolation wards have been established to treat and monitor Mpox patients. Any patient testing positive for Mpox can be admitted to these hospitals. In addition, at All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) New Delhi, Dr Reema Dada, Professor and Media Cell In-Charge, informed that AIIMS has reserved five beds for suspected monkeypox cases. If any patient shows symptoms of Mpox or is suspected of having it, they will be shifted to these



beds for treatment. In addition to the central Government, the Delhi Government's Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Hospital has also established an isolation ward for Mpox patients. The management has stated that, although no Mpox patients have yet been admitted to the hospital, any future cases will be placed in this ward. Dr Jugal Kishore, Director, Professor and Head of Community Medicine at Vardhman Mahavir Medical College and Safdarjung Hospital in the national Capital, explained that Mpox symptoms are similar to those of chickenpox or smallpox and include sores, blisters, rashes, or pimples on the face or body, potentially containing yellow pus. Other symptoms can include itching, vomiting, fever, headache, muscle stiffness, and lethargy.

BSES unveils new handloom centre



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a move to empower women and the revival of traditional handloom arts, the BSES has officially inaugurated its flagship Handloom Incubation Centre, 'Dhaga Vishwas Ka', in Uttam Nagar, West Delhi, under its CSR initiative. Building on the success of the first centre in Sangam Vihar, South Delhi, this new centre marks a crucial milestone in community development and cultural preservation. The 'Dhaga Vishwas Ka' initiative empowers underprivileged women by providing resources, training, and mentorship to create unique handloom products. The centre will promote innovation in traditional weaving techniques and sustainable practices while facilitating market access for beneficiaries. Currently, over 80 women are training at the Uttam Nagar Centre, which is equipped with 15 handloom machines, 12 charkhas, one tana-bana machine, 10 sewing machines, and a cutting and pressing table.

RECPDCL hands over 2 SPVs to Power Grid

PNS ■ GURUGRAM

REC Power Development and Consultancy Limited (RECPDCL), a wholly owned subsidiary of REC Limited, the Maharashtra CPSU under the aegis of Ministry of Power, handed over two project specific SPVs (Special Purpose Vehicles), Rajasthan IV-C Power Transmission Ltd and Rajasthan IV-E Power Transmission Ltd formed for evacuation of power from Rajasthan Renewable Energy Zone Ph-IV (Jaisalmer/Barmer Complex). Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (PGCIL) emerged as the Transmission Service Provider (TSP) through Tariff-based Competitive Bidding (TBCB) process conducted by RECPDCL, the Bid Process Coordinator, for development of above transmission projects on Build, Own, Operate and Transfer (BOOT) basis. The project Rajasthan IV-C Power Transmission Ltd covers construction of 765/400 kV, 3x1500 MVA & 400/220 kV, 5x500 MVA Pooling Station at Mandasaur, 171.75 Kms of 765 kV line and associated works.

POWERGRID acquires two transmission projects under TBCB



PNS ■ GURUGRAM

Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID) - a Maharashtra CPSU under Ministry of Power has acquired two Project Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) viz. Rajasthan IV C Power Transmission Ltd and Rajasthan IV E Power Transmission Ltd on 19th August 2024 for the Transmission System Projects for evacuation of power from Rajasthan REZ Phase IV (Part 2: 5.5 GW) (Jaisalmer/ Barmer Complex): Part C and Part E respectively after competing with various private sector players and emerging as successful bidder in Tariff Based Competitive Bidding (TBCB) process.

Sports specific rehabilitation workshop

PNS ■ AMRITSAR

REBOUND a one-day workshop on sports specific rehabilitation in association with Abhinav Bindra Foundation, Amandeep Hospitals and Sironix was held at the MYAS - GNDU Department of Sports Sciences and Medicine of Guru Nanak Dev University. Over 85 students and faculty members attended the workshop. Speakers talked about the diagnosis and rehabilitation of sports injuries using latest available techniques. Dr Amrinder Singh, Head of Department inaugurated the workshop and thanked Bhagyashree from Sironix for organising it. Dr Inderdeep Singh, Orthopaedic Surgeon, Amandeep Hospital emphasised on importance of clinical examination and imaging of knee and shoulder injuries in sports persons.

IN BRIEF

NF RAILWAY PROGRESS IN HEALTHCARE
Maligaon: The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has made significant strides in enhancing healthcare services across its network of hospitals, reflecting its strong commitment to the health and well-being of its employees, their families, and the general public. Under the leadership of Chetan Kumar Shrivastava, General Manager/NFR, the railway has invested immensely in modernizing hospital facilities towards equipping them with advanced diagnostic tools, OTs, and Intensive Care Units (ICUs).

HANDMADE RAKHIS SHOWCASED
Amritsar: On the eve of Raksha Bandhan, the Department of Apparel and Textile Technology (DATT) of Guru Nanak Dev University, students of MSc Fashion Designing (FYIP) and MSc Fashion Designing (2 years programme) organised an exhibition cum sale on handmade rakhis, key chains and hair accessories like hair bow clips. The students showcased their work of handmade products. "The development of products was truly sustainable, fashionable, innovative and affordable," said the university. As part of their curriculum, the students made rakhis with different techniques of macrame and crocheting. Head of the Department of Apparel and Textile Technology Dr Varinder Kaur said the rakhis made from different techniques were eye-catching.



TCS HIRES 65 GNDU STUDENTS
Amritsar: The Directorate of Placement & Career Enhancement of Guru Nanak Dev University organised Campus Placement drive by Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) company for BTech and MCA students of GNDU - Batch 2024. The company selected 65 students from these courses. These students have been offered a package in the range of Rs 3.36 lakh to Rs 9.00 lakh per annum. The students belong to Guru Nanak Dev University main campus, Regional Campuses of Jalandhar and Guraspur. These students will join their jobs after passing out their respective courses. Vice Chancellor Dr Jaspal Singh Sandhu congratulated the students and faculty members for the achievement.

Health Ministry introduces new security measures for doctors

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Days after nationwide protests by the medical fraternity in the wake of a tragic incident involving a trainee doctor in Kolkata, the Union Health Ministry has introduced new security measures for central government hospitals including strict entry and exit monitoring, installation of CCTV at strategic locations, escorts for female staff at night, and secure transport arrangements. In a directive issued to all heads of central government hospitals, the Ministry asked them to ensure adequate number of well secured duty rooms with basic amenities for female health professionals and deployment of women health professionals at night be preferably done in more than one in number. Highlighting the need for increased security in government hospitals, which are more accessible compared to private facilities, the direction sought including setting up control rooms, employing trained security guards, and implementing strict monitoring of hospital entries and exits. The Ministry also stressed the importance of regular emergency drills, staff training, and improved lighting in critical areas to ensure overall safety and effective emergency response.

Badlapur seeks...

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Given that the Badlapur incident has come on the heels of the much-discussed rape and murder of a junior doctor in a Kolkata medical college, the BJP-led MahaYuti government found itself on the defensive with the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) demanding the dismissal of deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnavis, who holds the State Home portfolio. Having gone into a damage-control mode, Fadnavis swiftly announced the formation of a Special Investigation Team (SIT), headed by Aarti Singh, a senior IPS officer of the rank of Inspector General of Police, to investigate the Badlapur sexual assault incident. Simultaneously, Fadnavis asked Thane Police Commissioner Ashutosh Dumbare to submit a proposal to the state government to fast track the case and prosecute the accused before a special court. Speaking separately to the media, chief minister Eknath Shinde said: "We have taken serious cognisance of the incident. We have already set up an SIT to investigate the case. We will fast-track the case and prosecute the accused in as quick a manner as possible. No one will be spared in the case". Meanwhile, the school management has suspended the principal, a class teacher and a female attendant in connection with the sexual assault incident.

In a related development, Leaders of the Opposition MVA -- comprising Congress, NCP (SP), Shiv Sena (UBT) -- came down heavily on the BJP-led MahaYuti government for the "very shocking and serious" incident. NCP (SP) Working President Supriya Sule said the incident is "very shocking and serious" and the state home department must take note of the citizens' anger. "Apart from stern action against action against the accused, a case should also be registered against the management of the institution who tried to suppress this matter," Sule said. Congress Leader of Opposition (Assembly) Vijay Wadettiwar demanded the suspension of a woman police official who reportedly made the victims' parents sit in the police station for nearly 12 hours before taking their complaint last week. "This case must be taken up by a fast track court to hear it in three months and the accused must be given the death sentence," Wadettiwar said. Leader of Opposition (Council) Ambadas Danve asked the state government to ensure the strongest possible punishment for the accused to serve as a deterrent and book all others found guilty. "The fear of the law has gone out of the minds of criminals. They feel that if others can get away, they also will not be caught and punished," Danve said.

Centre asks UPSC to cancel "lateral entry"...

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Asked about the criticism being faced by the Government over the issue, he said, "When the Opposition points an accusing finger at us, it needs to remember three fingers get pointed at it. Why didn't these parties, while in power, ensure recruitments against posts reserved for SCs, STs and OBCs?" In apparent reference to the issue, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi said the Congress would protect the Constitution and the reservation system at all costs and foil "conspiracies" of the BJP. "We will protect the Constitution and the reservation system at all costs. We will foil the BJP's conspiracies like that of 'lateral entry' at any cost," Gandhi said in a social media post in Hindi. "I am saying it again - by removing the 50 per cent reservation cap, we will ensure social justice based on caste census," the former Congress chief said.

SUPREME COURT HOLDS...

From Page 3

The court also appealed the protesting doctors to call off the strike and resume work. The bench said abstention from the work of doctors affects those segments of the society that are in need of medical care. "We earnestly appeal to all the doctors that we are here to ensure that their safety and protection is the matter of highest national concern. Please trust us, that is why we have not left the matter to the high court. "We felt this is not just a matter of a serious offence but which affects the institution of healthcare pan India. Therefore the need for the Supreme Court to take up the matter, the bench said. The 10 members of the

task force are Vice Admiral Arti Sarin, Director General, Medical Services (Navy), Dr D Nageshwar Reddy, Chairman and Managing Director, Asian Institute of Gastroenterology and AIG Hospitals, Hyderabad, Dr M Srinivas, Director of Delhi AIIMS, Dr Pratima Murthy, Director, National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS), Bengaluru, Dr Goverdhan Dutt Puri, Executive Director, AIIMS Jodhpur, Dr Saumitra Rawat, Chairperson, Institute of Surgical Gastroenterology, GI and HBP, Onco-Surgery and Liver Transplantation and Member, Board of Management, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, New Delhi.

The other members are — Professor Anita Saxena, Vice-Chancellor, Pandit B D Sharma Medical University, Rohtak, former Dean of Academics, Chief Cardio thoracic Centre and Head of Cardiology Department AIIMS, Delhi, Dr Pallavi Saple, Dean, Grant Medical College and Sir JJ Group of Hospitals, Mumbai, and Dr Padma Srivastava, formerly Professor at the Department of Neurology, AIIMS Delhi. It said the Cabinet Secretary and the Home Secretary to the Union Government, Secretary, Ministry of Health, Chairperson, National Medical Commission and president, National Board of Examinations, shall be the ex-officio members of the task force.

HC rapped for sexist...

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In its judgement, the Calcutta High Court bench of Justices Chitta Ranjan Dash and Partha Sarathi Sen High Court had observed that female adolescents should "control sexual urges" as in the "eyes of the society she is the loser when she gives in to enjoy the sexual pleasure of hardly two minutes". The high court had made the observations while hearing an appeal by a man who was awarded a 20-year sentence for sexual assault. The high court had acquitted the man. Justice Oka, who pronounced the verdict on behalf of the bench, said that directions have been issued to the States to implement provisions of Section 19 (6) of POCSO Act along with Sections 30 to 43 of the Juvenile Justice Act that deal with issues related to a child's need for care and protection and setting up of shelter homes.

Taking suo moto cognizance of the case titled "In Re: Right to Privacy of Adolescents", the Supreme Court said the observations were not only "highly objectionable" but also "completely unwarranted," as they violated the rights of adolescents under Article 21 of the Constitution. The Court expressed concern over the High Court's deviation from its remit to decide solely on the merits of the appeal, criticizing the judges for expressing personal views and preaching. Justice Oka wondered how the High Court used its power under Section 482 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, — that gives High Courts the power to prevent the abuse of the legal process and to ensure justice — to overturn the conviction in the case on the grounds that POCSO should be amended to recognize adolescent sexuality.

TRAI to crackdown on bogus...

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The telecom regulator has now "issued directions for enforcement of measures to curb the misuse of messaging services and protect consumers from fraudulent practices." "TRAI has mandated the Access Providers to migrate telemarketing calls starting with 140 series to online DLT platform latest by September 30, 2024 for better monitoring and control," it said. To deter the misuse of templates for promotional content, TRAI has introduced punitive measures for non-compliance. Content templates registered under the wrong category will be blacklisted, and repeated offences will lead to a one-month suspension of the sender's services, it asserted.

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

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



parents for cremation late in the night. On the next day, the doctors are on protest and a mob assembles at the hospital." The hospital is invaded and critical facilities are damaged. What was the police doing? A serious offence has taken place and the crime scene is within the hospital. The police should have protected the crime scene. How can the police allow vandals to enter the hospital. After the principal resigned, he is sent to another hospital. When his conduct was under scrutiny, how was he appointed to another college immediately," the bench said. If women cannot go to their place of work safely, then we are denying them equality, the apex court said. Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the West Bengal government, refuted the observations and

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

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

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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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



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



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

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

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

BSF officer completes Ironman challenge

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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



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

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

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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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



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

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

India, Malaysia elevate ties to comprehensive strategic partnership

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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



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

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

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

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



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

RSS, affiliates to discuss better cooperation at Palakkad meet

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

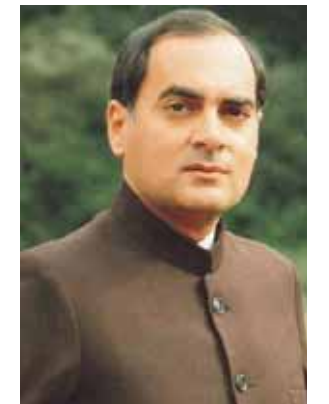
Modi pays tributes to Rajiv on 80th birth anniversary

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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



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



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

Israel recovers bodies of 6 hostages from Gaza

AP ■ 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.



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 ■ 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 ■ 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 ■ 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 ■ 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 camp near Danzig, now 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 Juster, 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 Cirener 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 ■ 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 Alakta 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 Consul 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 ■ 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.



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

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 would 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.

SPORTS LIFE IS A BEAUTIFUL LIFE: MANU TELLS STUDENTS

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Criscrossing 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 to 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. Praggnanandhaa faced the Petroff defense from 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

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 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 "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.



Debutants grab goals for Juventus

AP ■ LEGGEO (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 Fàbregas' first league game in charge of Como since taking over as head coach this offseason.

Atalanta routs Lecce

New signings Mateo Retegui and Marco Brescianini both scored twice as Atalanta routed Lecce 4-0 in a blistering start to its campaign. Brescianini joined last season's Europa League winners from Frosinone just three days ago and Retegui was signed last week from Genoa.

Brescianini got the opener when the midfielder pounced on a parried save by goalkeeper Wladimir Falcone after 35 minutes and then Retegui doubled Atalanta's lead with a powerful header on the stroke of halftime.

Retegui got the third from the penalty spot 12 minutes into the second period and then Brescianini took advantage of gaping holes in the Lecce defence to make it four after 65 minutes.

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

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Ac 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.

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

AP ■ BUENOS AIRES (ARGENTINA)

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

GOALKEEPERS

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

Defenders: Gonzalo Montiel (Sevilla), Nahuel Molina



(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).

Midfielders: Leandro Paredes (Roma), Guido Rodríguez (West Ham), Alexis Mac Allister (Liverpool), Enzo Fernández

(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, Richardson 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."

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