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TO WORLD PEACE

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AS BIDEN SIGNS FUNDING

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GST MOP-UP RISES
IN SEPTEMBER

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THROUGH AT
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11 SPORT

KANISHKA TO CANADA

EAM Jaishankar eases ties with US amid row

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The India US relationship is at an all-time high and the two nations have moved to a position where they see each other as very desirable, optimal and comfortable partners, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has said, stressing that like the Chandrayaan, bilateral ties will go to the moon and maybe even beyond.

Jaishankar made the remarks while addressing several hundred Indian-Americans who had gathered at the India House from various parts of the US to attend the 'Celebrating Colours of Friendship' event organised by the Embassy of India here on Saturday.

"There is one clear message today that our relationship is at an all-time high. But as they say in America, you ain't seen anything yet. So, we are going to take this relationship to a different level, to a different place," he said at the largest-ever gathering of Indian-Americans at the India House.

"In this changing world, I would say today that India and the US have moved to a position where we see each other as very desirable, optimal and comfortable partners with whom it's a natural instinct today to pick up the phone or if you meet someone and have a natural conversation," he said.

Jaishankar said the success of the G20 could not have happened without the support of the US.

"As the host, when things go well, the host always gets the credit. It's reasonable. But, the G20 could not have come together if all the members of the G20 did not work for its success," he said.

"The contribution, the support and the understanding that we got from the US to make a successful G20, I think that is something I would certainly like to recognise in public in Washington DC," Jaishankar said amidst applause from Indian-Americans.

"So, it may have been our success in a literal way, but I think it was the G20 (nations) success. To me, it was also a success of the India US partnership... please keep giving this partnership the support it needs, the support it deserves and the support it expects. And I can promise you that this relationship, like the Chandrayaan, will go to the moon, maybe even beyond," he said. Jaishankar said the human bond between the two countries makes the bilateral relationship unique.

"Countries do business with each other. Countries do politics with each other. They have military ties, they do exercises, and they have cultural exchanges. But when two countries have that deep human bonding,



that's a completely different ballgame. That is today the defining characteristic of our relationship," he said.

He said the people remember Rajiv Gandhi's visit to the US in 1985, Manmohan Singh's visit in 2005 and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's several visits.

"But I have to say that this one (PM Modi's recent state visit) was different, it was different in optics, and

if you ask me what has changed, I would say India and the US earlier used to deal with each other and now they work with each other," he said.

He recalled the recent collaborative endeavours between the two countries, all starting with the letter 'I'. These initiatives include the India-Middle East Economic Corridor, I2U2 (India, Israel, the US, the UAE), Indo-Pacific cooperation, and

the initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET).

"Alphabet 'I' is very good for the US, certainly," Jaishankar added.

He said the contribution of the diaspora in building the bilateral relationship is something fantastic.

"There are no words that can capture it. It is on that foundation that today we are looking ahead for... A new hope on the horizon... So, I think

when we look at the horizon, we see fantastic possibilities out there, and it's the community which is going to deliver on that," Jaishankar said.

He recalled that when PM Pandit Jawar Lal Nehru came to the US in 1949, there were 3,000 Indian Americans, when PM Indira Gandhi came in 1966, there were 30,000 Indian Americans, when PM Rajiv Gandhi came in 1985 there were 3,00,000 Indian Americans, when PM Modi came there were more than 3 million Indian Americans and it's grown to almost 5 million.

"If there is something unique about our relationship it is the human bond that we have. The role, responsibilities and commitment of the diaspora to the India US relationship is commendable," he added.

The Minister said the India of today is different from what it was earlier. "I want to share with you that this is truly a different India for which I speak. It is an India, which as you heard from others, is capable of the Chandrayaan-3 mission," he said. "It is an India which was able to pull off the most spectacular G20 and prove those who said that we will not be able to get 20, I don't want to say quarrelling nations but 20 countries with different positions, to come to the table together," he said.

This is an India, which showed during the Covid pandemic that it

could not only look after its people but could extend its hand to more than a hundred countries across the world, he said.

"I want to say in many ways, if there is a spring in our step, a confidence in our voice, a sort of squaring of our shoulders, there are very good reasons for it," he said.

"Because it is built today on 10 years of hard work... There are domains where our capacities have doubled or tripled," he said.

"The new India is an India of Chandrayaan, it's an India of CoWIN, it's an India of 5G. This is really what we are capable of, and it is this India today that the United States also sees. It is this India with which the United States actually has an appetite for working, much more closely," said Jaishankar.

Remembering Mahatma Gandhi ahead of his birth anniversary, he said calling him an extraordinary man would be the understatement of this century.

"He said so many things so tellingly. But at the end of the day, if we ask ourselves what was the message, the message at the end of the day was about doing the right thing, about doing the decent thing, and about leaving no one behind," he said. "Gandhiji's message is very complicated, but its essence is very, very simple," Jaishankar said.

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Avinash Mukund Sable celebrates after winning the men's 3000-meter steeplechase final event at the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou, China, on Sunday PTI

Azad wants to serve people

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Putting all speculations to rest, the chairman of the Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) Ghulam Nabi Azad on Sunday urged the party workers not to pay heed to the latest political grapevine, doing the rounds of corridors of power, that he is going to occupy the chair of Lieutenant Governor of Jammu & Kashmir in the near future.

Addressing a gathering of party workers on the occasion of the first foundation day of the party in Jawahar Nagar Municipal Park, Srinagar, Azad made it clear he is not interested in becoming the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu & Kashmir.

Azad said he is not looking for employment but wanted to serve the people of J&K. "I will request people not to trust the rumour mills which are working in overdrive.... There is a fresh rumour here that Ghulam Nabi Azad is going to be the next LG. "I have not come to



J&K) looking for a job, I want to serve the people," he added. Azad observed some people were trying to give the impression that he is looking for rehabilitation.

"When I came here in 2005 (as Chief Minister), I left two prized (Union) Ministries — Housing and Urban Development and Parliamentary Affairs — to serve the people. It was not as if I was without work," he said, referring to criticism by some quarters that he returned to J&K politics at the behest of the BJP. Azad, who remained

vocal on the issue of the Abrogation of Article 370 and Article 35A, once again observed in front of the mass gathering that it was a "great mistake".

"There were some political mistakes over many years which have pushed the State backwards, instead of going forward. In the last nine years, another great mistake was made — Article 370 and Article 35A were removed. "Article 35A, subsequently Article 35B, was not promulgated after Independence. It was brought by the Maharaja

(Hari Singh) in 1952. I said this in Parliament that had the BJP known that they would not have touched Article 370 and Article 35A. This mistake pushed us further back. There was an uncertainty whether the land will stay with us or not," he added.

The foundation day function in Srinagar was largely attended by the Kashmir-based leaders barring a few close aides of Azad from the Jammu region. After launching his political outfit in Jammu & Kashmir, Azad is concentrating on both the regions of Jammu & Kashmir to consolidate his support base ahead of the maiden Assembly polls.

Several former Congress leaders joined his bandwagon after quitting the Congress party. Acknowledging the hard work done by his party workers in the last year of its existence, Azad on Sunday patted their back claiming his party has emerged as a 'political alternative' in a span of 12 months.

2 October

Nation pays tribute to

Gandhi ji and Shastri ji

on their Birth Anniversary

Mahatma Gandhi ji's thoughts have inspired the entire world. Babu's speciality was to connect with people and make them connected with him. In the same way, Lal Bahadur Shastri ji will always be remembered for his tough leadership at a very crucial time of our history.

- Narendra Modi

CM for transforming Madhya Pradesh as model of cleanliness

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan offered shramdaan in the Swachhata Hi Seva - Cleanliness is the Real Service Campaign in Bhopal Haat Bazaar. He participated in the 'Ek Tareekh-Ek Ghanta-Ek Saath' programme. He cleaned the premises. The Chief Minister Chouhan gave a message of cleanliness to the people saying that Cleanliness is the Real Service. He said that God Resides Where Cleanliness Prevails. Underlining the importance of cleanliness, Chief Minister Sheri Chouhan said that cleanliness brings good health and happiness. Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi always laid emphasis on cleanliness. The Prime



Minister Sheri Narendra Modi also launched the Swachhata Bharat Abhiyan after becoming the Prime Minister in 2014. On the call of Prime Minister Sheri Modi, he offered

shramdaan for cleanliness. Madhya Pradesh is the cleanest state of the country. Bhopal is the cleanest capital of the country. The state stands top in cleanliness. Even in rural areas, efforts have been made

for cleanliness with public participation. It is our endeavour to engage every citizen in the cleanliness campaign. Efforts are being made for effective implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Swachhata Bharat Andolan by engaging the people, public representatives, social workers and every section of the society. Sheri Chouhan has appealed to the people to be particular about cleanliness. Maintaining cleanliness is not just a programme. It is an essential civic practice. Madhya Pradesh has become a model state in cleanliness pursuing the vision of the Prime Minister Sheri Modi. The Prime Minister Sheri Modi on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti, 'Swachhata

Hi Seva Abhiyan' has been launched countrywide from 15 September to 2 October 2023. Swachhata Pakhwada is being celebrated under the Swachhata Hi Seva campaign. The theme of Garbage-free India. In the 105th episode of Mann Ki Baat, Prime Minister Sheri Modi had appealed to spare one hour for shramdaan for cleanliness in the 'Ek Tareekh-Ek Ghanta-Ek Saath' campaign. He said that on the eve of Bapu's birth anniversary, the people should engage in the cleanliness campaign and offer him 'Swachhantjali'. Minister for Panchayat and Rural Development Sheri Mahendra Singh Sisodia, Mayor Smt. Malti Rai along with public representatives, departmental officers, Safai Mitras and a large number of people were present.



Indian Air Force's chopper after making an emergency landing in the fields at Dungariya village, Berasia Tehsil, Bhopal district on Sunday. Pioneer Photo

IIA Bhopal celebrates 'World Architecture Day' at Gauhar Mahal

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Commemorating the World Architecture Day, The Indian Institute of Architects (IIA), Bhopal Centre had a grand celebration in the city of lakes at Gauhar Mahal on Sunday with stupendous participation of experts and youth from architecture and design fraternity. Enthusiastic participation was witnessed in the celebration with an exciting showcase of architectural excellence, creativity, and community engagement. Notably, World Architecture Day is celebrated globally on the first Monday of October each year, and this year the theme of the program was, "Architecture for a Green Future," that perfectly aligns with the current global emphasis on sustainability and environmental consciousness.



The celebration hosted by IIA Bhopal Centre featured a wide range of activities and highlights, including Architectural Exhibition, Architectural Talks, Design Workshops, Panel Discussions, Community Engagement and networking with fellow professionals. Ar Akshay Selukar, Chairman, IIA Bhopal Centre enunciated "Let's build a brighter future

together! Thus, this year's theme of the World Architecture Day is 'Architecture for a Green Future'. This special event had an inspiring gathering of architects, designers, and enthusiasts from our community, appreciating the art and science of architecture on World Architecture Day. This year, we focused on the theme 'Architecture for a Green

Future' leading to the global emphasis on the environment and its conservation. The valuable thoughts of the renowned architects about paving the way for a greener environment will definitely contribute in creating more sustainable future ahead." Architect Hemant Vishwakarma, Vice Chairman said "Today is the need of the hour to create urgent awareness on Green Future, thus this year we focused on this theme. This celebration was aimed to highlight the importance of architecture in developing cities and human settlements." Architect Mohammed Waseem, Treasurer and Architect Niraj Pahade, Secretary, also shared his valuable thoughts on the World Architecture Day. Various other Executive committee members were also present on the occasion.

Met declares departure of Monsoon from Madhya Pradesh

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The withdrawal of monsoon has started from Madhya Pradesh. The Meteorological Department on Saturday announced the departure of monsoon from Morena and Sheopur Kalan. There may also be departure from Ujjain, Gwalior and Chambal divisions in the next 3-4 days. Monsoon will withdraw from MP before October 10. At the same time due to continuous rise in water in Bargi Dam of Jabalpur on Sunday, five gates have been opened by half a meter each. So far this monsoon, the gates of Bargi Dam have been opened four times. Due to an increase in water level, water was overflowing and coming out from the gate of the dam. According to Bargi Dam management, currently Bargi

Dam is filled with 3240 Mcum water. The water level of the dam is currently 423 meters. However, light rain will continue in the state for the next few days. On Sunday, there may be moderate to heavy rain in Singrauli, Sidhi, Rewa, Satna, Anuppur, Dindori and Balaghat districts. Monsoon entered MP on June 24, while monsoon became active in the state on June 25. Meteorologist said that the monsoon period lasts from June to September. Of these, there is heavy rain in July and August. Although this time there was no heavy rain in these two months, but due to the activation of a strong system in September, the rainfall figure came to par. Met told that due to the system forming in the Bay of Bengal, there is a possibility of light or moderate rain from October 1 to 3. After that the

humidity may increase further. Around 0.42 inches of water fell in Umaria, 0.18 inches in Chhindwara, 0.08 inches in Mandla, 0.003 inches in Seoni. The effect of heat was seen in Bhopal, Indore, Ujjain. The mercury reached 36 degrees in Guna. The temperature in Gwalior, Narmadapuram, Ujjain, Khajuraho was 35 degrees or more. The mercury was recorded up to 34 degrees in Damoh, Sagar, Satna, Sidhi, Tikamgarh, Ratlam and Shivpuri. Six districts of Madhya Pradesh - Guna, Ashoknagar, Damoh, Satna, Rewa and Sidhi are in the red zone. Rest of the districts have received good rains. Madhya Pradesh has received an average of 37.22 inches of rain from June 1 to September

30, whereas 37.38 inches of water was expected to fall. Accordingly, rainfall has reduced by 0.4 percent. The eastern part has received 4% less rainfall and the western part has received 3 percent more rainfall. The rainfall figure in Narsinghpur is more than 51 inches. It has rained the most here. Jabua, Burhanpur, Kargone, Narsinghpur, Seoni, Niwari, Ratlam, Bhind, Ujjain, Rajgarh, Dhar, Alirajpur, Barwani, Khandwa, Katni, Chhindwara, Dewas, Sheopur, Harda, Betul and Anuppur districts have received more than normal rainfall. Jabalpur, Sehore, Mandla, Balaghat, Dindori, Shivpuri, Datia, Sagar, Tikamgarh, Neemuch, Agar-Malwa, Morena and Shahdol districts have received more than 90 percent rainfall than normal.



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan addresses a public meeting in Chanderi, Ashoknagar district, Madhya Pradesh on Sunday. Pioneer photo

SBI takes the lead in Swachhata Hi Seva campaign 2023

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

In commemoration of Mahatma Gandhi's 153rd birth anniversary, the Central Government launched the nationwide Swachhata Hi Seva Campaign. In this initiative, the State Bank of India (SBI), recognized for its commitment to cleanliness and societal well-being, played a pivotal role. Kaliasot Dam has been identified for SBI's cleanliness endeavors, encompassing regular clean-up activities and the installation of informative cleanliness-promoting billboards. To rekindle public awareness and dedication to cleanliness, SBI introduced new billboards and dustbins in the vicinity. These additions aimed to encourage responsible waste disposal and maintain the area's cleanliness. The initiative was spearhead-



ed by Deputy Managing Director Binod Kumar Mishra, showcasing its uniqueness. Under his leadership, the Swachhata Hi Seva Campaign 2023 was launched across the SBI Bhopal circle, which includes Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, spanning 358 locations. Bank officers and local residents actively joined this campaign, demonstrating their unwavering commitment. Continuing their dedication, Binod Kumar Mishra, alongside Ajitav Parashar, GM NW 2 LHO Bhopal, led a cleanliness drive at Bus stand Katni and RBO Katni. They were joined by district Collector Mr. Avi Prasad, Superintendent of Police Mr. Abhijeet Kumar Ranjan, and

other bank officials. This collective effort garnered appreciation from the attending general public, acknowledging the bank's role in promoting cleanliness awareness. During the event, all officials and staff members pledged to uphold cleanliness principles, striving to make Bhopal the cleanest city in the country. In a post-event gathering, General Manager Kundan Jyoti and Neeraj Prasad reaffirmed their commitment to making Bhopal the top-ranked clean city in India. DGM & Circle Development Officer Deepak Jha, along with Deputy General Managers, officers, and bank employees, were also present. They collectively vowed and took oath to transform these efforts into a sustainable movement, with active public participation ensuring enduring success.

AIIMS uniting communities for service and cleanliness

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

AIIMS Bhopal, hosted a series of events during Sewa shramdaan, held on Sunday. The vibrant celebration of service for cleanliness indicates AIIMS Bhopal's commitment to foster a spirit in the community for cultivating a culture for a cleaner, healthier environment for all. A Mini Marathon, a lively event aimed at promoting fitness and wellness among participants was organized in which Doctors and Paramedics participated. It was a powerful display of unity within the community. A Nukkad Natak performed by the students of AIIMS Bhopal addressed pressing social issues to create awareness and advocacy for positive change. A Poster Competition Display and Photography Competition served as a vibrant showcase of artistic talent, allowing participants to express themselves through posters and photographs. These creative events highlighted the importance of community participation in the healthy society. Director Prof. (Dr) Ajai Singh shared his invaluable insights and inspiring vision with the gathering. His

words served as a motivational call to everyone for their endeavors towards service and cleanliness. All participants and Shram Sevakas participated wholeheartedly in taking the Swachhata Pledge, reaffirming their commitment to maintaining cleanliness and promoting hygiene. The assembly for Shramdaan at the Gandhi Gallery was a true representation of diversity, with officials, faculty, students, staff, and members of the community coming together for a selfless act of service. The shramdaan activities also included initiatives to improve cleanliness in patient toilets within the OPD areas, IPD wards, and the proper disposal of scraps and waste materials from patient care areas. Furthermore, outreach sanitation activities were conducted in collaboration with the community at the Rural Centre in Bhojpur and the Urban Centre in Berkhedha, aligning with the vision of a Swachh Bharat as envisioned by Mahatma Gandhi. Students of AIIMS Bhopal participated in a plantation drive, contributing to the green mission of the institute.

CM plants Belpatra, Peepal saplings

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan today planted saplings of Belpatra, Peepal and Gulmohar in the Smart City Garden along with Jan Seva Mitras, journalists and citizens. On the occasion of his rebirth day, Himanshu Chouhan planted saplings along with Chief Minister Chouhan. Himanshu's father and senior journalist Charan Singh Chouhan said that by the grace of God and the amount approved by the government, his son's liver transplant was successfully conducted. After the transplant, he was discharged from the hospital on October 1, hence he celebrates October 1 as Himanshu's rebirth day. He expressed gratitude to Chouhan for the assistance. Along with him, his wife Inghesh Chouhan, journalist Sikandar Ahmed, surgeon Subodh Varshney and Rohit Chouhan also planted saplings. Along with Chief Minister Chouhan, Swami Vivekananda University Sagar Founder Vice-Chancellor Anil Tiwari planted saplings with his family. Sushri Somya Tiwari, Dr. Pratibha Tiwari, Swasti Tiwari, Brijesh Chouhan and Ram Dhakad also planted saplings.

Youth ends life over alleged threat for implicating in a rape case

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Depressed over blackmail and threats of fabricating in a rape case and car stealing case a 26-year-old youth committed suicide by jumping into the Upper Lake in the night on Saturday. Police said that on Saturday, the police recovered his body from near the statue of Raja Bhoj located in Upper Lake. The deceased has been identified as Mithlesh Kumar Durkute of Lanji. At present he was living in his sister's house in Data Colony on Airport Road, Bhopal. He came to get treatment for his sick mother. A suicide note from the family members of the deceased has gone viral. It is written in this suicide note that a friend was blackmailing a girl along with her. He was being threatened with being implicated in a false case of rape. He had left sister's house without informing on Saturday. His body was recovered from the big pond at around 1 in the night. Wrote this in the suicide note In this suicide note, Mithlesh

has written about committing suicide after being fed up with the harassment by his friend Adarsh of Lanji who currently lives in Kolar. It is written that the friend is blackmailing a girl along with her. Took pictures of me with a girl, made a video. Before his death, Mithlesh had posted a photo of a young man on his WhatsApp status. Kohefiza police station in-charge Brijendra Marskole said that a case has been established in the matter and investigation has been started. The exact reasons for suicide have not been revealed. The family members of the deceased have not yet submitted any suicide note. Meanwhile a 22-year-old youth committed suicide by hanging with the ceiling near 12 Quarter Ahmedabad Palace under Koh-e-Fiza police station area. According to the police, Nadir Baig was currently unemployed. On Saturday night at around 8 in the evening he reached his mother and said, Mother, please forgive me and later committed suicide.



Congress State President Kamal Nath being felicitated by the members of the Chourasia community during Chourasia Samajik Mahakumbh at BHEL Dussehra Ground in Bhopal on Sunday. Pioneer photo

CM inaugurates Aajeevika Mart and Saras Mela

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan inaugurated the state-level Aajeevika Mart and Saras Mela-2023 at Bhopal Haat. Chief Minister Chouhan reviewed and appraised himself about the products and encouraged the women of self-help groups. On this occasion, Panchayat and Rural Development Minister Mahendra Singh Sisodia, Mayor

Malti Rai, Additional Chief Secretary Malay Srivastava and Chief Executive Officer, Rural Livelihood Mission M.L. Belwal along with departmental officers, self-help group members and general public were present. Aajeevika Mart has been constructed in Bhopal Haat complex at a cost of Rs 49 lakh 34 thousand. Products manufactured by self-help

groups of all 53 districts will be sold. Self-help groups will have direct access to urban consumers without middlemen. There are 43 rural marts operating in the state for distribution of products from different districts. Aajeevika Mart will emerge as the coordination center of all these rural marts. Patanjali Ayurveda will provide technical support.

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Woman sexually harrassed before her fiance at Ghaziabad park

PNS ■ GHAZIABAD

In a shocking case, a 22-year-old woman from Noida, who went to visit Sai Upvan city forest in Ghaziabad with her 23-year-old fiance, was allegedly sexually harassed for hours and subjected to extortion by a constable, a home guard who were on duty at a police response vehicle (PRV) of the Ghaziabad police during an incident on September 16. An FIR was registered on the basis of the woman's complaint as the suspects continued harassing her by way of phone calls and even visited her house after the incident. The incident came to light when the woman underwent a series of ordeal and dialled the police emergency number for help. The police identified the three suspects as constable Rakesh

Kumar, Digambar Kumar - a home guard, and, one other unidentified man who allegedly held the couple captive and harassed them for about three hours. The police man pressured the young woman to engage in sexual activity and also demanded Rs 10,000 from the couple, deceitfully promising their release. The couple endured the torture for about three hours before finally managing to leave only after transferring Rs 1,000 to the officer via the Paytm platform. "The accused even touched my private part," the woman alleged in her complaint. The incident occurred on September 16, but came to light on September 28, after the couple struggled for 12 days to get the FIR registered against the accused cops. The couple

are engaged and the two had met in the park for a quiet moment which turned into a nightmare. The couple, a woman from Noida and her fiance who had come to meet her from Bulandshahr, went for an outing together to Sai Upvan city forest on September 16. They were sitting together in Sai Upvan, which is adjacent to the Hindon River metro station and alongside the GT Road. Finally, an FIR was officially filed at the Kotwali Nagar Police Station, resulting in the immediate suspension of the constable from 112-PRV at Sai Upvan. The woman in the FIR said that Rakesh Kumar also called her on September 19 of which she has a call recording and they also visited her house on September 22 when they heard that she had given a complaint

against them. Further actions are being pursued to hold the implicated home guard accountable and to investigate the third individual involved in this disturbing incident. The Assistant Commissioner of Police (Kotwali Nagar police station) Nimish Patil, while divulging the details said that on September 28, an incident was reported in which a woman informed that within the jurisdiction of the Sai Upvan located in the police station's area, two police men from PRV 112 engaged in misbehavior, harassment, and demanded illegal money from her and her fiance. "The police promptly registered a complaint in accordance with the relevant sections upon learning of the incident. Further investigation revealed that two police personnel were deployed

on PRV 4757, one of whom was a constable, and the other a home guard," said the ACP. "The constable was immediately suspended, and the department was notified for disciplinary action against the home guard. Information about a third individual involved in the incident was also obtained, and the police are taking preliminary legal actions in that regard," the ACP added. Upon complaint, the three were booked under IPC sections 354a (1)(ii) for physical contact and advances involving explicit sexual overtures and demand for sexual favours, 323 for voluntarily causing hurt, 504 for intentional insult and 342 for wrongful confinement besides levying the provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act at Kotwali police station on September 28.



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan with Minister for Sports and Youth Welfare Yashodhara Rajee Scindia unveils a trophy during the opening ceremony of 'Khelo MP Youth Games-2023' at TT Nagar Stadium in Bhopal on Sunday. Pioneer photo



Indore Municipal Corporation Commissioner Harshika Singh participated in cleanliness drive held at her office premises in Indore on Sunday. Pioneer photo

Guv participates in cleanliness work

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Governor Mangubhai Patel participated in cleanliness activities under the "Ek Tareek, Ek Ghanta, Ek Saath" campaign on October 1 and offered shramdan. Governor Patel cleaned the New Market complex premises with a broom. He administered the oath of cleanliness to the people and sanitation workers present in the 'Shramdaan for cleanliness' programme. Citing the example of Indore, the Governor inspired the people of Bhopal to become leaders of cleanliness in the country. New Market Vyapari Sangh and public representatives congratulated Governor Patel by presenting him a sapling and a shawl.

Governor Patel said that children should be inculcated with the culture of cleanliness. Explain the importance of always keeping your home and premises clean. Make cleanliness a habit. Inspire children to maintain cleanliness. Cleanliness campaign is not a one day campaign, we should inculcate it in our lifestyle. Bhopal Municipal Corporation Mayor Smt. Malti Rai was present. It may be noted that from 16th to 30th September, 'Swachhata Hi Seva' Fortnight was celebrated across the country, under which many activities based on cleanliness were organised. Under this, "Ek Tareek, Ek Ghanta, Ek Saath" campaign was organised under the 'Shramdaan for cleanliness' programme from 10 am on October 1.

Army chopper makes emergency landing

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

An army helicopter had to make an emergency landing at 9 am on Sunday in a farm in Dugaria village of Berasia, about 60 km from the state capital Bhopal. This emergency landing has been done due to technical fault. There were five crew members including the pilot in the helicopter who escaped unhurt. According to the villagers, the helicopter was circling around the dam and then landed in the field. After this, when the villagers asked questions and answers, the army personnel refused to answer anything. Berasia police station in-charge Dilip Jaiswal said that

According to the villagers, the helicopter was circling around the dam and then landed in the field

an emergency landing of the army helicopter was made in village Dugaria at around 9 am on Sunday morning. In which there were five crew members including a pilot. They were going from Bhopal to Jhansi. Suddenly the helicopter saw a red tail vibration (emergency signal visible), after which an emergency landing of the helicopter was made in a field

on the banks of the dam. All 6 army personnel have informed their officers about the matter. The technical fault of the helicopter is being investigated. After which he will leave for further progress. This helicopter came carrying engineers, supporting staff and technical team. Dropped the team here and left again. Now the engineer and technical team is investigating the fault in the helicopter. Earlier on the 91st foundation day of the Air Force, an air show was organized on September 30 at the Upper Lake in Bhopal, the capital of Madhya Pradesh. The helicopter had also come to participate in this air show. He was flying back towards his destination from Berasia.

Samajik Kranti campaign going on in the state

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan performed bhoomi puja and dedicated development works worth more than Rs 154.47 crore at Ladhui in Sehore district. The Chief Minister said that a Samajik Kranti campaign is going on in the state. Chief Minister Chouhan said that the mission to change the lives of common citizens is going on. No stone will be left unturned in the development works. A network of excellent roads has been laid in the villages. Medical, engineering colleges, CM Rise School, hospitals are being built. There is no dearth of budget for development works. No stone will be left unturned in improving the lives of the people. We will provide employment to one person in the family. The Chief Minister said that under the Mukhyamantri Charan Paduka Yojana in the state, materials like shoes, slippers, water bottles, sarees etc. are being given to those plucking tendu leaves. Service to people is service to God. Chief Minister Chouhan said that for the convenience of the students, now M.A. classes will be started in the Government College of Ladhui. He said that he had got this college started. Chouhan said that the women would never have imagined that some day their brother would deposit money directly into their account. The Chief

Minister provided benefits to tendu leaf collectors. Forest Minister Kunwar Vijay Shah and MP Ramakant Bhargava and public representatives were present. Chief Minister Chouhan dedicated the 51 kilometer Sehore-Ichhawar-Kosmi road with an amount of Rs 96 crore 93 lakh. He performed bhoomi puja of Mangrol to Tikamod-Badikheda-Ratanpur to Lachaur road at a cost of Rs 20 crore 30 lakh, Mongrakhedha to Bhurakhedha road at a cost of Rs 3 crore 91 lakh, Tribal Girls Education Complex Ladhui Jhali to be constructed at a cost of Rs 31 crore, construction of Sub Health Center building at Bhadakuji at a cost of Rs. 71 lakhs, construction of Sub Health Center building at Basantpur at a cost of Rs. 71 lakhs, construction of Forest Range Office building in Veerpur at a cost of Rs. 26 lakhs, construction of Forest Range Office building in Ladhui at a cost of Rs. 13 lakhs, construction of Forest Guard Naka Sewaniya Parihar at a cost of Rs 13 lakh, construction of Forest Guard Naka Magarpat at a cost of Rs 26 lakh and construction of Forest Guard Naka Siradi at a cost of Rs 13 lakh. Chief Minister Chouhan said that funds are being deposited in the accounts of Ladhui Bahnas every month. It has been increased to Rs 1250 every month since October. Gradually this amount will be raised to Rs 3 thousand. Chief Minister Chouhan said that houses will be built and given

after survey under the Mukhyamantri Ladhui Bahna Yojana to those who are left out in the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. Chief Minister Chouhan said that students who have passed class 5th and 8th and are going to study in another village will be given a bicycle, a laptop will be given to the students who have scored 75 percent marks in class 12th, and a scooter will be given to 3 toppers each in their schools. Benefit distribution under Mukhyamantri Charan Paduka Yojana This year, under the Mukhyamantri Charan Paduka Yojana, 19,602 shoes are being distributed to the head of each family, slippers to 17,856 women, water bottles to 20,956 families and 38,016 sarees to each female member of the family in 20,956 tendu plucker families of Sehore district. About Rs 2 crore 98 lakh has been spent in this scheme. In the year 2023, 19055.035 standard bags of tendu leaves were collected in the tendu leaf collection season, in which an amount of approximately Rs 5 crore 71 lakh has been paid as tendu leaf collection remuneration to 61,784 tendu leaf collectors and 17,399 card holding families. In the year 2023, the collection year 2021 tendupatta collection bonus amounting to approximately Rs 3 crore 07 lakh has been paid and for the collection year 2022, Tendupatta Collection Bonus amounting to approximately Rs 5 crore 58 lakh is being paid.

Delhi government school vice-principal's driver cheats for over Rs 4 lakh

New Delhi: The driver of a Delhi government school's vice-principal duped him of over Rs 4 lakh after taking the victim's mobile phone on some pretext. Police said the accused has been arrested and identified as Sandesh Chaudhary aka Sunny Chaudhary (23), a resident of Lal Kuan, Ghaziabad. The official said that the accused after doing fraudulent transactions from his employer's mobile phone used to delete messages so to not get caught. The matter came to light after, the complainant, Mahesh Kumar Sharma (55), a resident of Babarpur, presently appointed as Vice Principal of a gov-

ernment school, Mandawali reported at Cyber northeast district police station that he received an SMS on his mobile phone regarding debit of Rs 33068 from his savings bank account with Punjab National Bank, Kamla Nagar, Delhi. On suspicion, he obtained statement of his bank account from which it emerged that, since March to June 2023, 18 such transactions amounting to Rs 4,44,630 have been fraudulently made by some unknown person. "During detailed examination of the complainant often sought help of his driver

namely, Sandesh for online transactions and other networking related jobs, but due to his suspected activities, he was terminated from the job in the end of June," said Deputy Commissioner of Police (northeast), Joy Tirkey. During investigation, information was obtained from Punjab National Bank, Kamla Nagar and Flipkart from which it came out that the fraudster had used that amount for purchasing of various items including 14 mobile phones, one LED TV, one refrigerator, one washing machine, bluetooth speakers & one wooden TV unit from Flipkart.

"Further, technical surveillance was mounted and on the basis of information collected, a raid was conducted at the possible hideout and team was successful in nabbing Sandesh," said the DCP. During interrogation, Sandesh revealed that he clandestinely obtained the ATM number of the complainant. For online payment, OTP is essentially required. For obtaining OTP, he used to take mobile phone of his employer on some pretext and after successful payment of the ordered items from Flipkart, he deleted all the SMSs related to transactions," said the DCP.

"In this way, the accused made 18 such transactions of total amount for Rs 4,44,630 for shopping on Flipkart. He further disclosed that in order to avoid detection by the delivery agents, he used to give the vague address of his nearby locality and took delivery near some famous landmark near his rented house," said the DCP. At his instance, many expensive items (including mobile phones, fridge, washing machine, LED, TV unit, etc.) were recovered from his rented accommodation. "He cheated his employer to fulfill his desire of living a luxurious lifestyle," the DCP added.

Chief Minister dedicates Vikas Bhawan

New Delhi: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that development of villages is a must for development of the country. Development of rural areas is the top priority. Addressing the dedication ceremony of the newly constructed building of Vikas Bhawan cum e-Governance Center on Jail Road the Chief Minister urged the officials to work with enthusiasm for development. Work dedicatedly to make the villages self-reliant in every respect. Develop the villages in such a manner as would stop migration to urban areas. The Development Commissioner's office, Directorate of Panchayat Raj, Madhya Pradesh State Employment Guarantee Council, Madhya Pradesh Rural Road Development Authority, Rural Engineering Service, Madhya Pradesh State Social Audit Committee, State Water and Sanitation Mission and M.P. State Rural Livelihood Mission offices will function from the Vikas Bhawan.

Vikas Bhawan cum e-Governance Center has been constructed at a cost of Rs 78 crore 42 lakh on an area of 722 lakh 51 thousand 500 square feet. There are 2 floors for parking in the basement of the six-storeyed building. Arrangements have been made for the meeting of more than 1000 officers and employees. Key features of the building include centralized air-condition management, fire safety, huge auditorium with seating capacity of 600 officials for training programmes, artificial lawn and power backup. The Development Commissioner's office, Directorate of Panchayat Raj, Madhya Pradesh State Employment Guarantee Council, Madhya Pradesh Rural Road Development Authority, Rural Engineering Service, Madhya Pradesh State Social Audit Committee, State Water and Sanitation Mission and M.P. State Rural Livelihood Mission offices will function from the Vikas Bhawan.

JNU walls defaced with anti-India, anti-Modi and pro-Kashmir slogans

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Jawaharlal Nehru University's walls were defaced with anti-India and anti Modi slogans on Sunday. The objectionable slogans like 'Free Kashmir', 'Free IOK', and 'Modi Teri Kabr Khudegi' (Modi, your grave will be dug) slogans, were found written on the walls of the university. This comes after similar slogans were written on the walls of the educational institution in December last year. In a video going viral online, it is seen that several walls on the JNU campus were defaced with slogans like, 'Free Palestine', 'Free IOK', and 'Modi Teri Kabr Khudegi' (Modi, your grave will be dug) slogans. However, the university administration does not yet have any information about the people who wrote the slogans. The administration says that it

is currently being investigated who wrote these slogans and what is the whole plan behind this. So far, no individual or group has claimed responsibility for the incident. The Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad said it has written to the Jawaharlal Nehru University administration for an inquiry into a recent incident of "anti-national" slogans being scribbled on the walls in the campus. The students' outfit has also demanded that the administration take immediate action to identify those responsible and fix accountability for not being able to stop such cases. "Being a student organisation, we are gravely concerned about the frequent anti-Bharat slogan-writing incidents on the JNU campus. Yesterday, some students captured pictures of slogans like 'Indian-Occupied Kashmir', 'Free

Kashmir', 'Bhagwa Jalega', etc. On the School of Languages building wall," the letter read. The administration painted the walls clean on Sunday morning after it was brought to its notice and photos of the walls went viral, Vikas Patel, ABVP secretary for JNU, told PTI. The students' body has demanded that the chief security officer of JNU should be held responsible for failing to prevent such cases. According to JNU students, the matter first came to light on Sunday morning when some students saw controversial slogans written on the walls of JNU's School of Languages. On looking carefully, it looks like the names written in the controversial sentence, in blue ink, have later been covered with red ink. University students have shared pictures of objectionable slogans written

on the JNU campus walls. In these pictures, it can be seen that objectionable slogans like 'Free Kashmir' and 'IOK (Indian Occupied Kashmir)' are written on the wall in JNU's School of Language campus. At some other places, these slogans have also been written on the floor with blue paint. All these pictures with hate slogans are being said to be from School of Language of JNU. It is noteworthy that controversial slogans have been seen on the walls of JNU earlier as well. Last year, caste-based slogans were written on the walls here. The name plates of some professors were blackened. As Jawaharlal Nehru University is one of the best universities of the country, a lot of conflict of political ideologies is seen here. University student Amit says "Till now conflicts, debates and discussions

on political ideologies were seen. But this type of abusive language and sloganeering against the country shows mental frustration." In February this year, the portrait of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was damaged inside the university. Then there was violence between two groups of students. Before that, there was a lot of uproar in JNU regarding the screening of BBC documentary in January 2023. In December last year, a similar incident was reported from Delhi's JNU wherein controversial slogans were written on the walls of several buildings located on the university campus, including the offices of several professors. Slogans against Brahmin and Vaishya communities were written on the walls of the School of International Studies-II building on the university campus.

PM to visit MP, Rajasthan today

Bhopal: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch multiple development projects in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh during his visit to the two states on Monday. The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said he will launch and lay the foundation stone for development projects worth about Rs 7,000 crore in Rajasthan and around Rs 19,260 crore in Madhya Pradesh. During his visit to Chittorgarh in Rajasthan, he will inaugurate the Mehana-Bathinda-Gurdaspur gas pipeline, built at a cost of Rs 4,500 crore in yet another step to promote a gas-based economy, it said. The prime minister will also inaugurate Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited's (HPCL) LPG plant in Abu Road. This plant will bottle and distribute 86 lakh cylinders per annum, resulting in net reduction in running trucks carrying the cylinders by around 0.75 million kilometres annually.

Modi leads nation in hour-long 'shramdaan'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday pitched for blending fitness and well-being with cleanliness as he led a nationwide cleanliness drive in which thousands of people participated in an hour-long "shramdaan" across the country. Besides Modi, several other BJP leaders, including Union Ministers, took up cleanliness programmes in different parts of the country. Home Minister Amit Shah participated in Ahmedabad while BJP chief JP Nadda did so in Delhi. According to the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry, more than 9.20 lakh sites across the country were adopted for the mega drive, named as "Swachhjanjali" to Mahatma Gandhi on the eve

of his birth anniversary. People from all walks of life, from politicians to students, wielded brooms and took part in the 'Swachhata hi Seva' campaign, in response to the Prime Minister's appeal the cleanliness drive. Wielding a broom, Union Home Minister Amit Shah participated in a cleanliness drive in Ahmedabad. BJP chief JP Nadda also took part in the drive in Delhi's Jhandewalan area. Uttar Pradesh Yogi Adityanath participated in cleanliness drive 'Swachhata Pakhwada' in Sitapur. Taking part in the "shramdaan (voluntary labour)", Union Power Minister RK Singh told reporters, "We (Centre) have taken a resolve to make the country clean. It is a big challenge but we will do it." Union Ministers and BJP



leaders across the country grabbed brooms and took part in the 'Swachhata hi Seva' campaign. Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel participated in a cleanliness drive in Ahmedabad. BJP MP Dinesh Sharma, who also took part in a clean drive, said "swachhata (cleanliness) has become the face of the country." Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri, urging people to join the drive, said in a post on X, "Come, let's create a new history! At 10 am today, let's volunteer for an hour, paying homage to Mahatma Gandhi through cleanliness." "Scan or visit local cleanliness programmes to join. Dream of a #GarbageFreeIndia Together, we'll make it happen," he said. Indian Air Force chief Air

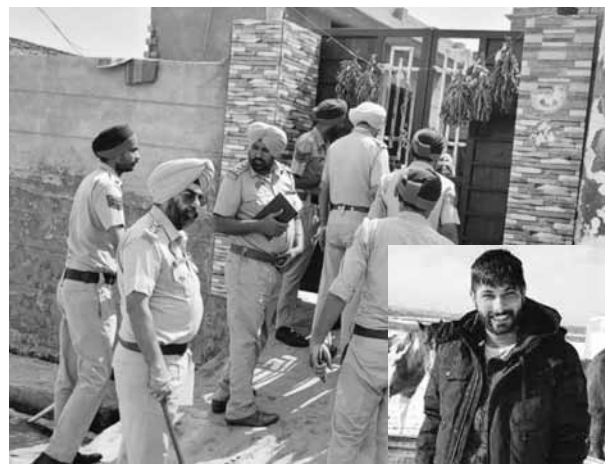
Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari took volunteered for a cleanliness activity in New Delhi. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi said it held cleanliness drives at 500 locations across the national capital. Cricketers such as Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma also appealed to the people to come together for "Ek Tareekh, Ek Ghanta, Ek Saath" and join the largest citizen-led movement to strengthen the resolve towards cleanliness. Among the States, Uttar Pradesh adopted more than a lakh sites for cleanliness drives while Maharashtra will conduct the programme in over 62,000 locations, including the beaches, religious places, schools, colleges and water bodies. In Telangana, temples of historical significance were cleaned during the drive.

Canada-based Lakhbir stepping up terror activities in Punjab: Intelligence

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Amid the renewed focus on the Khalistani terrorists and their expanding arc of terror syndicate following the Indo-Canada diplomatic row, intelligence reports have flagged the increasing footprint of Canada-based gangster-turned-terrorist Lakhbir Singh alias Landa who has been jacking up terror activities in Punjab via an additional operational base in Portugal. Backed by the notorious Pakistani spy agency Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), Landa has been engaged in gunrunning from Pakistan to Punjab. Besides Canada, Portugal has emerged as a key operational base of Landa where a number of his cohorts are based and directing the terror operations against India.

Landa is the mastermind behind the RPG attack at the Intelligence Headquarters of Punjab police in Mohali on May 9, 2022 and at police station Sarhali Kalan in Tarn Taran on December 10, 2022. "Lakhbir Singh alias Landa has been deploying his foreign based associates for retrieving and disposing off consignments consisting of firearms, explosives and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) smuggled from Pakistan in collaboration with Pak ISI, into Punjab and carrying terror activities through their local contacts," reads a recent intelligence report. The report further said, "It has been discerned that Portugal has emerged as an important operational base of Landa's criminal network as some of his key associates have established themselves in Portugal from where they exer-



cise control over the criminal syndicate." One of Landa's foreign based associates, Parminder Singh alias Pattu has emerged as a key member of Landa's criminal network, who is residing illegally on tourist visa in Portugal. Parminder Singh, son of Tarlochan Singh, is a resident of Baghelewala village in Ferozepur district of Punjab. "It came to notice that recently he (Parminder Singh alias Pattu) arranged one AK-47 assault rifle, one MP-5 sub-machine gun, hand grenades, pistols along with live car-

tridges for the use of criminal syndicate in Punjab through his contacts in Pakistan," the report highlighted. On Wednesday, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) conducted multi-State searches following a similar intelligence input against another gangster and Landa's associate Lawrence Bishnoi, a criminal mastermind with a notorious track record. Bishnoi has been linked to several high-profile crimes, including the murder of renowned Punjabi singer Sidhu Moosewala and for issuing threats against Bollywood actor Salman Khan. Recent intelligence inputs warned of an alarming trend in Bishnoi's illicit activities who has established a direct line of communication with Nasir Khan, an ISI operative. "The connection suggests that Bishnoi and his gang might

be diversifying their criminal portfolio by procuring weapons with the help of Pakistan Intelligence Operatives (PIOs) and making use of these weapons for furthering gangster activities in the region," reads the Intelligence report. Bishnoi's gang is notorious for involvement in extortion and killings but the recent revelation of links with Pakistan-based entities suggests a "strategic shift in the gang's operational focus." "The gang's involvement in arms smuggling represents a significant escalation in their criminal activities and poses a considerable risk to the nation's security. The potential backing by Pak ISI operatives also indicates a concerning overlap between organized crimes and geopolitical adversaries, enhancing the threat profile of Bishnoi's operations," warned the report.

Rajnath takes part in cleanliness drive



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

As part of 'Swachhata Hi Sewa' campaign, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday took part in a special cleanliness programme 'Ek Taarikh, Ek Ghanta, Ek Saath', organised by Controller General of Defence Accounts (CGDA) at its premises in Delhi Cantonment. Rajnath led the shramdaan activities, which included a cleanliness drive, beautification of common area and a plantation drive. The defence minister also interacted with the Safai Karamcharis and lauded their efforts in ensuring cleanliness in the premises. He motivated them to continue working with zeal and dedication and carry forward the mass social movement launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Government to realise the dream of Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi of a 'Clean India'. Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan, Financial Adviser (Defence Services) Rasika Chaube and CGDA S G Dastidar also participated in various cleanliness activities on the occasion. Rajnath also interacted with the Principal Controllers and Controllers of Defence Accounts heading the offices of PCDA (Army) Jammu,

PCDA (Air Force) Dehradun, PCDA (Army) Jaipur, PCDA (Pensions) Prayagraj, CDA (Army) Meerut, CDA Guwahati, CDA Jabalpur, CDA (Regional Training Centre) Bengaluru and CDA Chennai and reviewed the implementation of the 'Swachhata Hi Sewa' campaign in their respective jurisdictions. The 'Swachhata Hi Sewa' campaign, which began on September 15, 2023, will culminate on the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi on October 02. As part of the campaign, shramdaan activities are being undertaken through community participation as a prelude to the Swachh Bharat Diwas on Gandhi Jayanti. Over 20,000 officers and staff of Defence Accounts Department across more than 1,100 offices and residential colonies across the country have been undertaking cleanliness activities including removal of garbage, weeding out of files and awareness campaigns on the importance of proper sanitation and hygiene. Similar cleanliness drives have been launched at various other establishments of Ministry of Defence, Services and related organisations all over the country as part of the 'Swachhata Hi Sewa' campaign.

India needs stronger Armed forces, says Minister

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday called for effective utilisation of financial resources as India needs stronger Armed forces with modern equipment to become a developed nation by 2047. "If we wish to create a developed nation, we will need stronger armed forces with modern arms and equipment. Therefore, it is necessary to effectively utilise the financial resources available to us," he said after launching several digital initiatives of the Defence Accounts Department (DAD) during its 276th annual day celebrations here. "There should be a fine balance between the demands of services and the allocation of available resources," the minister added. Describing the DAD as the "guardian of defence finance", he emphasised the need to bolster the internal vigilance mechanism so that any suspicious activity can be detected and reviewed immediately.



This, he said, will not only help in dealing with the problem quickly but also increase the trust of the people in the department. Rajnath also suggested to the DAD for the creation of an in-house standing committee that can research and study market forces and provide high-quality market intelligence to the field officers. He appreciated the organisation for its efforts towards enhancing the country's defence capabilities through a transparent and efficient financial system. Terming accounting as extremely important for an individual, organisation and the nation as a whole, he said, "Our wants are unlimited, but the available resources are limited." He commended the DAD for ensuring judicious use of resources while extracting optimum output. The digital initiatives launched included an integrated defence finance dashboard for the Ministry of Defence -- SARANSH (Summary of Accounts, Budget and Expenditure

for Raksha Mantralaya) and BISWAS (Bill Information and Work Analysis System and e-Raksha Awaas). While Rajnath lauded the DAD for coming out with numerous digital initiatives, he exhorted it to develop its professional capabilities to deal with the complexities arising out of the constantly-evolving times. He urged it to collaborate with reputable institutions such as Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) and the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) to develop and adopt customised training modules, as per requirements. The minister urged DAD officials to keep in mind two broad aspects while extending financial advice -- realistic assessment of the demand of the user agency and understanding of the product's market. He stressed the need to pay attention to the fact whether there is a need to buy a product or not and if a similar product of equal or greater effectiveness is available somewhere else in the market at a lower cost, according to the defence ministry.

This understanding will further increase the quality of financial advice, he said. To develop such an understanding, Rajnath suggested the creation of an in-house mechanism, a standing committee of experienced people who can research and study market forces and provide high-quality market intelligence to the field officers. "Big banks and financial institutions develop in-house economic intelligence and research teams. On similar lines, the DAD needs to develop an in-house team for market research and intelligence," he said. The defence minister also recommended collaboration with industry associations and business schools for extensive study of market conditions. Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan, Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari, Chief of Naval Staff Admiral R Hari Kumar, Financial Advisor (Defence Services) Rasika Chaube, Controller General of Defence Accounts S G Dastidar and other senior officials of Ministry of Defence were present during the event.

Modi to visit Rajasthan, MP to launch development projects

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch multiple development projects in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh during his visit to the two poll-bound States on Monday. The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said he will launch and lay the foundation stone for development projects worth about Rs 7,000 crore in Rajasthan and around Rs 19,260 crore in Madhya Pradesh. During his visit to Chittorgarh in Rajasthan, he will inaugurate the Mehana-Bathinda-Guraspur gas pipeline, built at a cost of Rs 4,500 crore in yet another step to promote a gas-based economy, it said. Modi will also inaugurate Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited's (HPCL) LPG plant in Abu Road. This plant will bottle and distribute 86 lakh cylinders per annum, resulting in net reduction in running trucks carrying the cylinders by around 0.75 million kilometres annually. This will help to cut down about 0.5 million tons of CO2 emission per annum, it said. Modi will also inaugurate the houses constructed under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban at a cost of about Rs 140 crore. As part of the Government's focus on providing safe and adequate drinking water, Modi will lay the foundation stone of Jal Jeevan Mission projects worth over Rs 1,530 crore in Gwalior and Sheopor districts. These projects will together benefit more than 720 villages in the region. He will also lay the foundation stone of nine health centres under the Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission and inaugurate and launch several other projects. Assembly polls in both Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan are expected to be held in November-December.



Among the other projects, he will throw open a four-lane road on NH-12 (new NH-52) on the Darah-Jhalawar-Teendhar section, which has been constructed at a cost of more than Rs 1,480 crore. This will help ease the transportation of the produce of mines from Kota and Jhalawar districts, the statement said. Foundation stones for constructing and widening the railway overbridge from two lanes to four in Sawai Madhopur will also be laid. Modi will inaugurate several railway projects, tourism facilities and a permanent campus of the Indian Institute of Information Technology, Kota. During his visit to Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh, he will inaugurate the Delhi-Vadodara Expressway, which has been

developed at a cost of about Rs 11,895 crore. He will also lay the foundation stone for five different road projects worth over Rs 1,880 crore, the statement said. In line with his vision to ensure a pucca house for every family, the prime minister will initiate the 'grih pravesh' ceremony of over 2.2 lakh homes built under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Gramin, it said. Modi will also inaugurate the houses constructed under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban at a cost of about Rs 140 crore. As part of the Government's focus on providing safe and adequate drinking water, Modi will lay the foundation stone of Jal Jeevan Mission projects worth over Rs 1,530 crore in Gwalior and Sheopor districts. These projects will together benefit more than 720 villages in the region. He will also lay the foundation stone of nine health centres under the Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission and inaugurate and launch several other projects. Assembly polls in both Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan are expected to be held in November-December.

Awareness programme on 'menstrual health' held



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Joining the Government's initiative on menstrual hygiene to promote women's health, 'Menstrual Health-One more step towards women's health', the Army Hospital (R&R) Delhi Cantonment here organised a menstrual health awareness programme 'Mahawari mein Swachhta' on Sunday. A lecture cum demonstration was organised at Army Hospital (R&R) and senior officers and women from all walks of life, including adolescent girls participated in the event, army officials said. The social taboos and myths associated with men-

struation, medical implications of good menstrual hygiene, and simple but effective ways to deal with menstrual issues were highlighted during the event. The lack of proper menstrual hygiene can be the source of genital tract infections which can later lead to infertility. It was also discussed how the ignorance about simple facts about menstrual hygiene can stall the overall growth of young girls, and become a hindrance to them getting a good education, and society as a whole needs to change its attitude about menstruation which is essentially a physiological process.

Afghan Embassy in Delhi announces shut down of operations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Afghanistan Embassy in New Delhi has announced that it is ceasing operations from October 1 citing a lack of support from the host government, failure to meet expectations in serving Afghanistan's interests and reduction in personnel and resources. Making this announcement late Sunday night, the Afghanistan embassy in a statement said it regrets announcing the decision to cease its operations, effective October 1, 2023. "It is with profound sadness, regret, and disappointment that the Embassy of Afghanistan in New Delhi announces this decision to cease its operations," the statement said. The embassy said this decision, while deeply regrettable, was made after careful consideration, taking into account the historic ties and long-standing partnership between Afghanistan and India. The embassy statement also listed key factors affecting its ability to continue the mis-



sion effectively and said that they were the primary reasons for the "unfortunate closure". The embassy cited a "lack of support from the host government", alleging that it has experienced a notable absence of crucial support from the host government, which it said hindered its ability to carry out duties effectively. The mission also cited "failure to meet expectations in serving Afghanistan's interests" as one of the reasons. "We acknowledge our shortcomings in meeting the expectations and requirements necessary to serve the best interests of Afghanistan and its citizens due to the lack of diplomatic support in India and the absence of a legitimate functioning government in Kabul," the mission said. It also said due to unfore-

seen and unfortunate circumstances, there has been a significant reduction in both personnel and resources available to it, making it increasingly challenging to continue operations. "The lack of timely and sufficient support from visa renewal for diplomats to other critical areas of cooperation led to an understandable frustration among our team and impeded our ability to carry out routine duties effectively," the statement said. Given these circumstances, "it is with deep regret that we have taken the difficult decision to close all operations of the mission with the exception of emergency consular services to Afghan citizens till the transfer of the custodial authority of the mission to the host country," it said.

Hour-long cleanliness drive launched in BLW, BHU

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Under the nationwide cleanliness campaign, named 'One Date, One Hour, One Time for Cleanliness' the drive was launched ahead of the 154th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi at various places in the city including Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) and Banaras Hindu University (BHU) here on Sunday. In BLW, under the leadership of General Manager (GM) Basudev Panda, the officers, employees and their families joined for a cleanliness mega campaign. The BLW set an example by doing mega shramdaan at 320 identified places in the entire BLW campus on the theme of 'Cleanliness is Service' on the call of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Under 'Cleanliness Fortnight' as per the guidelines of the Ministry of Railways, the campaign began at 10 am under the leadership of GM. Senior officers including Principal Chief Electrical Engineer SK Srivastava, Principal Chief Materials Manager Rajneesh Gupta, Principal Chief Medical Officer Dr Devesh Kumar, Chief Vigilance Officer Pramod Kumar Chaudhary, Chief Engineer VK Shukla, Financial Advisor and Chief Accounts Officer (TOT) Ajay Srivastava, Chief Mechanical Engineer (Service) Neeraj Jain, Chief



GM Basudev Panda and other officers offering shramdaan at BLW in Varanasi on Sunday.

Quality Assurance Manager Praveen Kumar, Chief Material Manager Tilok Kothari, Deputy Chief Personnel Officer, (Headquarters) Shyam Babu, Public Relations Officer Rajesh Kumar, members of Staff Council and others also offered their shramdaan in Surya Sarovar premises during hour-long drive. The campaigns were also launched at Tagore Park and in the workshop areas. The students of BLW Inter College, Civil Defence, St John's Ambulance Brigade, members

of Bharat Scout Guide, members of different unions and others also participated in the cleanliness drive. The entire programme was conducted by Chief Safety Officer SB Patel. In BHU, the campaign was launched at various places. At Sir Sunderlal Hospital (SSH), under the leadership of Medical Superintendent (MS) Prof KK Gupta, the doctors, officers, students and employees conducted a cleanliness campaign in the hospital premises. During this, Deputy Medical Superintendent Prof Ankur

Singh, Prof Amit Anand, Nursing Superintendent Prakash Sharma and others were present. At Mahila Mahavidyalaya (MMV), one the eve of birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and Lal Bahadur Shastri, week-long 'Clean and Healthy India' campaign was launched. BHU Registrar Prof Arun Kumar Singh, Dean of Students Dr Anupam Kumar Nema, Joint Registrar (General Administration) Dr Nandlal and Principal Prof Rita Singh and many others were present.

BJP leader praises PM for fulfilling dreams of Gandhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Regional Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president Dilip Singh Patel praised the Prime Minister Narendra Modi for fulfilling the dreams of Mahatma Gandhi by launching a nationwide cleanliness drive. He said that in 2014, when Modi became the PM, he himself started this cleanliness campaign from Kashi by sweeping the lane and ghat. "Today, this campaign has taken the form of a people's movement," he said, adding that recently, in the 105th episode of 'Mann Ki Baat', the PM had called for cleanliness and shramdaan in public places under 'One Date, One Hour Together' on Sunday. Cleanliness and shramdaan was done at Amrit Sarovar in view to pay a true tribute to Babu. "Cleanliness is the basic mantra of a healthy and peaceful life," he said.

In the morning itself, while addressing the people Patel said that the people were seen to be conscious about cleanliness in every nook and corner of the country. "Today, brooms were seen in the hands of



Regional BJP chief DS Patel and others at statue of Sardar Patel in Varanasi on Sunday.

common people including dignitaries who offered shramdaan by cleaning public places in their respective areas. The campaign was launched at Aditya Sarovar in Aditya Nagar Nevada under Ravidas Mandal. In this cleanliness campaign and Shramdaan programme which started at 10 am, Patel and other BJP leaders swept the floor, picked up the garbage,

cleaned the silt on the stairs near the lake, made people aware about cleanliness and garlanded the statue of Sardar Patel.

In the cleanliness campaign, Surendra Patel, Suresh Singh, regional co-media in-charge Santosh Solapurkar, Madhukar Pandey, Abhishek Mishra, Mandal President Shatrughan Patel, corporator

Garima Singh, former corporator Vineet Singh, Anil Srivastava, Dinesh Kalra, Shailensh Pandey, Rakesh Mohan Dixit, Amarnath Singh Patel, Anil Singh, Arun Singh, Sita Gupta, Jitendra Patel, Vijay Verma, Ratneshwar Modanwal, Shashank Prajapati, Sheshmani Devi, Salgu Patel, Shyam Bhushan Sharma and others participated in the campaign.

Massive drive held at Assi Ghat

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

On the call of the Prime Minister, under the joint aegis of 95 battalion Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Srijan Samajik Vikas Nyas, Nagar Nigam, Ganga Task Force and National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), a tribute was paid to the 'Father of the Nation' Mahatma Gandhi on the eve of his birth anniversary at Assi Ghat here on Sunday.

In the presence of UP Minister of State (Independent Charge) Ravindra Jaiswal, the participants pledged to fulfill the dream of clean India and keep the country clean with their actions.

Mayor Ashok Tiwari, MLC Hansraj Vishwakarma, Padma Shri Dr Saroj Chooramani and many other dignitaries were also present to offer their shramdaan.



UP Minister Ravindra Jaiswal, others offering shramdaan at Assi Ghat in Varanasi on Sunday.

The programme was presided over by Transport Commissioner (UP Govt) Chandar Bhushan Singh. Chief of Srijan Nyas Anil Kumar Singh, brand ambassador of Ganga Haritima Abhiyan, played an important role in making the programme

successful. Commissioner of Police (CP) Mukta Ashok Jain, Chief Development Officer Himanshu Nagpal, Municipal Commissioner Shipu Giri, Nagar Swasthya Adhikar Dr NP Singh, Deputy Commandant Navneet Kumar, Assistant Commandant Vinod

Kumar Singh, Praveen Singh and personnel of 95 CRPF Battalion, members of Ganga Task force, NDRF officers and personnel, BJP leaders including Saurabh Singh Patel, volunteers of Srijan, students of Brahma Vidyalaya and others were also present.

CORE GM, others take part in 'shramdaan'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

On the call of Prime Minister, officers and employees under the leadership of General Manager of Central Organisation for Railway Electrification (CORE) Pramod Kumar took part in a 'shramdaan' related to cleanliness in the office premises and railway colonies. The cleanliness fortnight is being observed in the CORE from September 16 till October 2. To spread awareness about cleanliness among the employees of CORE, a large number of activities related to cleanliness have been carried out during Swachhta Pakhwada.

The swachhta pakhwada started on September 16 with the administration of cleanli-



ness oath by GM to the officers and employees of the CORE. Under the clean office campaign, extensive cleaning was

done in all departments and premises of the office on September 18 and 19. From September 20 to 22,

cleanliness campaign was conducted in all residential colonies under Swachh Residential Complex. Under the Swachh Neer Abhiyan, all water treatment and filtration plants, overhead tanks, water bodies and drinking water systems of the CORE complex were inspected from September 25 to 26.

Posters, standees and banners were put up at all major places of CORE to create awareness for overall cleanliness, ban on single-use plastic and encourage use of cloth bags and messages were also displayed through social media. The CORE has always been striving towards cleanliness and is making an important contribution in making the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan successful.

MLA for maintaining environment

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

MLA from Varanasi Cantonment Saurabh Srivastava and Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) of Varanasi Division of North Eastern Railway (NER) Vineet Kumar Srivastava called upon the people, especially railway employees and passengers to maintain the environment. They were addressing a function organised at the second entry of Banaras railway station under the campaign 'One Date One Hour at 10' to pay homage to Mahatma Gandhi on the eve of his birth anniversary. Extensive cleaning was done through collective shramdaan offered from 10 am to 11 am. On the occasion, the branch officers including the DRM have also taken pledge of cleanliness.

On the occasion, extensive tree plantation was done in the park of Banaras station complex by the MLA, DRM and other officers for the purity of the environment. The Drug Free India and Swachhta Hi Seva Abhiyan rally organised under the aegis of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India and it was flagged off by the MLA. On the occasion, the DRM and officers participated in the cleanliness drive organised at Banaras station. To stop single-use plastic, jute and cotton bags were distributed to the passengers by the DRM and the MLA. Other officers distributed pamphlets containing information to the passengers about adopting environment-friendly behavior and abandoning artificial resources. On the call of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, 'Swachhta Hi Seva' campaign



MLA Saurabh Srivastava addressing a function at Banaras station in Varanasi on Sunday.

was organised in the entire country on the eve of Gandhi Jayanti in which the PM has underlined the importance of cleanliness. The basic objectives of cleanliness cannot be achieved without the participation of every section of the society. That is why for the success of the cleanliness campaign, Varanasi Division of North Eastern Railway along with the entire country participated in this countrywide campaign and contributed towards building a clean India.

Senior Divisional Mechanical Engineer (EnHM) Apoorva Swarnkar, Chief Medical Superintendent Dr RJ Chaudhuri, Senior Divisional Mechanical Engineer (C&W) Anubhav Pathak, Senior Divisional Signal and Telecommunication Engineer Rajat Priya, Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer (Traction) RN Singh, Senior Divisional Safety Officer Balendra Paul, Divisional Personnel Officer Vivek Sharma, Assistant Commercial Manager AK

Suman and other officers, station employees, voluntary organisations, children and teachers of Glenhill School, scouts and guides etc participated.

AWARENESS RALLY TAKEN OUT: On the eve of Mahatma Gandhi Jayanti, a joint meeting of Central Communication Bureau and Press Information Office (PIB), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, Varanasi and Yuvak Mangal Dal, Dhanpalpur and Hariyali Foundation was held on Sunday at Panchayat Bhawan located in Dhanpalpur of Arazilines development block area. The programme of shramdaan was held apart from goshi, cleanliness rally, quiz competition, and street drama during 'One Day, One Hour' campaign. During the programme, the cleanliness public awareness rally was flagged off by chief guest Prashant Kakkar, media communication officer PIB along with career guru Ravindra Sahay

and gram pradhan Kailash Maurya. This rally went around Dhanpalpur village and spread the message of cleanliness from house to house apart from creating awareness. It ended again at the venue of Panchayat Bhawan. During the programme, Disha Creation Varanasi made people aware about cleanliness through street plays and songs at various places in the village. Ten winners were given prizes by conducting a quiz by Regional Publicity Officer Dr Lalji. All the guests who came to the programme were honoured with mementos by Hariyali Foundation. At the end of the programme, the people present there took a pledge of cleanliness. It was conducted by Nand Kishore Rajbhar. The programme was also attended by Mahesh Maurya, Ram Singh Verma, OP Singh, Chhotelal Gautam, Tarakeshwar Singh, Sandeep, Ramashray, Ajay, Rahul, Ravi Singh, Pradeep Singh, Ashutosh Aditya, Shivkumar etc.

Mahakumbh 2025 to be grand in many ways

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

From expanding its size to enhancing facilities, the Mahakumbh 2025 would be grand in more than one aspect.

The size of the mega religious event will be expanded by around 800 hectares from 3,200 hectares of Kumbh 2019. It will have five more sectors (25) as compared to 20 in 2019 and spread towards Phaphamau side (Rasulabad) of Ganga and downstream of Sangam (Chhatnag). Moreover, to ease the movement of around 40 crore expected devotees and

tourists there will be 30 pontoon bridges over Ganga and Yamuna. Kumbh 2019 had 22 pontoon bridges and was visited by around 25 crore people.

All these issues were discussed during the 15th board meeting of the Prayagraj Mela Authority, chaired by divisional commissioner Vijay Vishwas Pant, Kumbh Mela Adhikari Vijay Kiran Anand.

"This time, 30 pontoon bridges will be built for easy movement of devotees and the mega religious event will be held in 25 sectors," said Anand. Also, a huge pandal with a

capacity to hold 10,000 people at one go will be set up.

Around 1.45 lakh toilets will be set up in the vast mela area and 10,000 sanitation workers deployed. There will be 25,000 dustbins, 800 cleaning gangs and an ICT based monitoring system would be put in place. All these proposals have been approved in principle by the Board and will be sent to the Apex Committee for approval. "Efforts to give the message of clean Mahakumbh will start from Magh Mela 2023-24 itself. After the mela, 100 FRP toilets will remain

here throughout the year so that filth does not spread and the mela area is kept clean," said Anand. The state government of Prayagraj has approved a budget of Rs 23.48 crore for the widening and construction of new roads leading to the Maha Kumbh-2025. The funds will be used for road widening and the construction of a link road and a new road to decongest the gathering of devotees. Additionally, funds have been allocated for the construction of three ghats. With the approval of funds, the work will be expedited.

Stress on adopting cleanliness

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

A cleanliness drive was organised throughout the district on Sunday. At Deewan Ghat of Vindhachal MLA Ratnakar Mishra, Principal Secretary, Social Welfare and nodal officer, Dr Hari Om and DM Priyanka Niranjan led the drive in which the locals participated on a large

scale. In the premises of DIG office DIG RP Singh himself took the command himself along with PAC and police personnel. On the occasion he said it is the need of the hour that we adopt cleanliness in daily routine. At Police Lines Superintendent of Police (SP) Abhinandan cleaned the premises. He was accompanied

by police personnel. Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Anupriya Patel and MLC Shyam Narain Singh 'Vineet Singh' conducted cleanliness drive near Patel Chauraha located at Bharuhna.

MEETING: District Magistrate Priyanka Niranjan while presiding over the meeting of Udyog Bandhu at the Collectorate on Saturday

proper action should be taken by the departments and in case any application was rejected, proper reason should be told to the applicant. The LDM submitted the report regarding the target under different schemes, its achievements and the reason behind the pendency as well as rejection. The DM concluded the meeting with the direction to the officials that the problems of the entrepreneurs were to be taken seriously.

DRIVE: Under the direction of DM Priyanka Niranjan the team led by additional district magistrate (ADM/Finance & Revenue) Shiv Pratap Shukla challan of 51 vehicles has been done during the period from September 12 to 30. Giving details of the drive against tax evasion and overloading senior mines officer Shailendra Singh said revenue of Rs 43.50 lakh will be realised. He said under the drive 27 vehicles had been handed over to the police across the district and 24 vehicles challaned online.

11 COUPLES REUNITE: Under 'Project Milan' programme 11 couples reunited through the Family Counselling Centre (FCC) located at Police Lines on Sunday. The couples were living separately due to misunderstanding over trivial issues and the cases were brought to the police. The police had referred them to the FCC and after sep-



DIG RP Singh cleaning his office premises by doing 'shramdaan' (voluntary labour) along with police personnel

arate sittings the couple agreed to live together. The counsellors and staff wished them a successful life and a bright future. On the day incharge of the centre sub-inspector Shashi Tiwari, head constable Savitri Devi, head constable Pinki Jaiswal and Sapna, counsellors Nirmala Rai and Dr Krishna Singh along with others were present during the counselling.

MAN DIES: One person found in an unconscious state near the treasury office died in a hospital on Saturday. The guard of the treasury informed the PRV 112 that about the person lying on the ground near the treasury office under the City Kotwali area. He was brought to the divisional hospital.

The police had recovered a used syringe near the place where the person was lying and a toxic substance from his pocket. According to the police it seemed that the man became unconscious due to the overdose of the drug which led to his death in the hospital. On information Station House Officer (SHO) City Kotwali Bal Mukund Mishra reached the spot. On the basis of the photograph of the deceased was identified as Deepak Giri (29) of Vijapur under Dehat Kotwali police station. The SHO said the cause of death can be said clearly only after the post-mortem.

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Resilient

Taking on challenges from the West, India walks with confidence to strengthen ties with the US

Amid the diplomatic brouhaha following the killing of India-branded terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Canada, India has embarked on a determined and nuanced offensive to present its side of the story on the global fora. During an interaction with Indian journalists in Washington DC, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar criticised Canada for "normalising" violence, threats and intimidation against our diplomats and missions. Tensions between India and Canada have escalated following Justin Trudeau's allegations of Indian involvement in the killing of Nijjar, a Khalistani extremist. Jaishankar highlighted ongoing issues with Canada's "permissiveness" toward terrorism and extremism, as well as the lack of response to extradition requests. He emphasised the need to address the larger issue, rejecting the idea that threats and intimidation should be justified as freedom of speech. The Minister, at an Indian community event in Washington DC, also highlighted the resilience and growth of the India-US relationship, emphasising the need for continued collaboration between the countries. He underscored the unprecedented trajectory of the India-US partnership, describing it as "desirable, optimal and comfortable". Jaishankar expressed optimism regarding the future of bilateral ties, drawing a parallel to India's historic Chandrayaan mission. He praised the US for its "invaluable support" in ensuring the success of the G20 Summit. The Minister said he believed that the partnership would continue to soar, "possibly even beyond the moon".



Amid diplomatic discussions, he dismissed Trudeau's allegations of the Indian Government's involvement in Nijjar's murder as "inconsistent with India's policy". Jaishankar's stance sought to vindicate India's position on the matter. In a separate meeting with US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin, the two explored avenues for strengthening bilateral defence ties, including the co-production of defence items. Meanwhile, across the Atlantic, a meeting of the Indian High Commissioner with the Indian community was disrupted by a few persons with anti-national credentials, bolstering Jaishankar's claim that hardline anti-India elements have taken roots in the West and they get all the leverage to carry out activities against India's interests in the name of freedom of speech. The West must realise that such elements are not fighting for anybody's rights or freedom, they have amassed ill-gotten wealth and wield significant power by claiming to fight for a "just cause" against India. But the fact is that their ideology is based on exclusion, intimidation and violence and that they have no support base in India. An ordinary Punjabi does not identify with them or subscribe to their views. The West must be wary of their presence and activities as these go against its own democratic principles. The Indian External Affairs Minister is doing the proper thing in taking up the cudgels to unmask these elements and show the world that they are just a bunch of desperadoes masquerading as freedom fighters.

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PICTALK



A sand sculpture created by sand artist Sudarsan Pattnaik on the 'Swachhata Pakhwada at Puri beach

Gandhian approach to world peace



RAJDEEP PATHAK

Mahatma's ideas of nonviolence act as lighthouse in the modern day world where storms of hatred and factionalism rage

In a world marked by conflict and division, the pursuit of global peace remains an enduring aspiration of humanity. It is a quest that has been championed by leaders, thinkers, and activists throughout history. One of the most prominent figures in this quest was Mahatma Gandhi, whose philosophy of nonviolence continues to inspire people around the globe. The concept of nonviolence stands as a beacon of hope and a path toward sustainable peace.

As the world commemorates the International Day of Nonviolence and celebrates Mahatma Gandhi's birthday on October 2, it is crucial to move beyond the celebration and understand it as a solemn commitment that global leaders must undertake (read acknowledge) for the betterment of humanity, which in future can offer a transformative vision that should guide us through the turbulent waters of our times.

Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy, of Satyagraha (truth-force), emphasized the power of truth and love to transform societies and resolve conflicts. Gandhi's influence extended far beyond the borders of India, leaving an indelible mark on the global struggle for peace. Historian Eknath Easwaran captured Gandhi's significance when he wrote that "Gandhi's teachings on nonviolence and his fearless commitment to justice resonate not as relics of the past but as timeless lessons for a world still grappling with violence and injustice."

The universality of Nonviolence stems from the fundamental recognition of human dignity and the shared aspiration for peace. Drawing inspiration from diverse religious and philosophical traditions, Gandhi synthesised the principles of 'Ahimsa' (non-harm) and 'Satyagraha' (truth force) into a powerful tool for social and political change, demonstrating the efficacy of nonviolent resistance.

Gandhi's influence resonated globally, inspiring figures like Martin Luther King Jr., who championed Civil Rights in the United States. King's commitment to nonviolent resistance was deeply rooted in his Christian



faith and the teachings of Gandhi. In his famous "Letter from Birmingham Jail," King wrote, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere," underscoring the interconnectedness of humanity and the necessity of nonviolent action in the face of injustice. He went on to state that "Nonviolence is a powerful and just weapon which cuts without wounding and ennobles the man who wields it."

Similarly, Nelson Mandela had unquestionable faith in the power of nonviolence. To him, "Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence and the truth is the only lasting legacy we have. All other political systems have failed. Ours is the only approach that can guarantee world peace because it is the only approach that can guarantee that mankind will be relieved of the curse of war."

Further, Desmond Tutu's struggle against apartheid in South Africa showcased the transformative power of non-violence. Tutu emphasized that nonviolence was not just a tactic but a way of life. To him, "Forgiveness and reconciliation are not just ethereal, spiritual things. They have concrete, pragmatic applications." The International Day of Nonviolence observed on the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, serves as a reminder



THE UNIVERSALITY OF NONVIOLENCE STEMS FROM THE FUNDAMENTAL RECOGNITION OF HUMAN DIGNITY AND THE SHARED ASPIRATION FOR PEACE

of the global significance of this philosophy. The United Nations, recognising the importance of nonviolence in resolving conflicts and promoting peace, has actively championed this day. The UN has recognised the intrinsic connection between peace and sustainable development in its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In a world grappling with complex geopolitical tensions, the efficacy of nonviolence as a strategy for conflict resolution cannot be overstated. Peace activist and granddaughter of Mahatma Gandhi, Ela Bhatt underscored this connection. She believes that "Without peace, development is impossible, and without development, peace is not achievable."

In recent years, nonviolent movements have emerged as powerful forces for change in various parts of the world. From Rosa Parks, who refused to give up her bus seat, to Malala Yousafzai, who stood up for girls' education in the face of violence, to 'The Arab Spring' in the Middle East, to 'The Umbrella Movement' in Hong Kong, and the global climate strikes led by Greta Thunberg are examples of how nonviolent resistance remains relevant in contemporary global struggles. The protests, fuelled by a desire for

democracy, social justice and environmental concerns for leaders to awake from their slumber, demonstrated that the collective power of non-violent action could challenge established norms and demand change.

The birthday of Mahatma Gandhi and the International Day of Nonviolence is a clarion call for action. In a world grappling with diverse challenges, the principles of non-violence offer not just a historical legacy but a roadmap for the future. As Mahatma Gandhi himself had declared, "Nonviolence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind."

Without exaggeration, it can be said that education stands as a formidable tool for nurturing the values of nonviolence from an early age. Nelson Mandela's insight, from his "Long Walk to Freedom" that people must learn to hate but can also be taught to love, underscores the transformative potential of education. Curricula that incorporate teachings on conflict resolution, empathy, and understanding lay the foundation for a more peaceful and tolerant world.

(The writer is a programme executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TROUBLE OVER POETRY

Sir — Rashtriya Janata Dal MP, Manoj Jha, is under attack for the mere recitation of the poem, "Thakur ka Kuan," during the recently concluded special session of Parliament. Poet Om Prakash Valmiki laments, "Oven is made of mud, mud is from the pond, the pond belongs to the Thakur." Munshi Premchand's story by the same title was the inspiration for poet Valmiki. The main character in the story, Gangi, a lower caste, makes a vain attempt under the cover of darkness to fetch some 'clean' water from a Thakur's well for his ailing wife, Jokhu. Manoj Jha read the poem to capture the upper caste dominance over all aspects of life in a village. We read Thakur in a title used by feudal landlords in the past.

It is a fact that cruelty towards people belonging to lower castes is on the rise in new India. Social ostracism and discrimination based on caste refuse to disappear. It was reported recently that in Kantasan village in Patan district of Gujarat, a ration shop owned by a Dalit faced a boycott from the Thakur community. In an inaugural function in a temple in Kannur district of Kerala, a priest refused to pass on the small lighted lamp to Kerala Minister for Temple Affairs, K Radhakrishnan, who belongs to the Scheduled Caste community, to light a bigger traditional lamp. RJD MP Professor Manoj Jha's recital of the poem in Parliament and the DMK Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin's caustic comment on the prevailing social injustice and inequality in Sanatana Dharma emerged from a multitude of such incidents in the country. Mahatma Gandhi wanted to dismantle the caste system "root and branch."

Haridasan Rajan | Kozhikode

RBI EXTENDS DEADLINE FOR 2K NOTES

Sir — The recent decision by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to extend the deadline for the deposit and exchange of Rs 2,000 denomination banknotes until October 7, 2023, is a welcome move. This decision comes after the initial deadline of

'Annadata' Dr Swami Nathan is no more



The progress in agriculture should be measured not on the basis of agricultural income or growth, but on the basis of the increase in the income of the farmers. Dr Swami Nathan Commission maintained this opinion. In 1966, Nathan created a high-yielding wheat variety by hybridizing wheat seeds from Mexico with local wheat from Punjab. Similarly, the cultivation of improved varieties of rice, the staple food of India, was always striving for the economic upliftment

of poor farmers. Poverty disturbed by the failure of farmers' agriculture due to inadequate credit and the vagaries of nature, the commission headed by Dr. Swami Nathan, concerned with the suicide of farmers in debt, said that the progress in agriculture should be measured on the basis of farmers' income and not on the basis of agricultural income or growth. Dr. Swami Nathan aimed to achieve the objectives of food security, easy supply to agriculture, development of dryland farming, increase in profit by increasing agricultural productivity, reduction of imports, adjustment of prices of agricultural products to the global market, and preservation of the environment and ecosystem, among other things. His efforts were valuable. Dr. Swami Nathan was truly the "Annadata" of Indians.

Dattaprasad Shirodkar, | Mumbai

September 30 had passed, providing much-needed relief to citizens who may still possess these notes.

The RBI's decision to rework the situation and extend the deadline demonstrates a considerate approach to the circumstances of the people. It recognizes that some individuals may still hold these notes, and it ensures that they have a fair opportunity to exchange or deposit them.

Furthermore, the clarification that banks will cease accepting Rs 2,000 banknotes for credit to accounts or exchange into other denomination banknotes from October 8 is essential information for the public.

The provision allowing people to approach the 19 RBI Issue offices to exchange the Rs 2,000 banknotes, up to a limit of Rs 20,000 at a time, is a practical solution for those who may have a significant amount of these notes. The option to send the banknotes through India Post for crediting respective bank accounts, subject to relevant regulations and due diligence, adds a convenient avenue for compliance. The article's background on the introduction of the Rs 2,000 denomination cur-

rency note in 2016 and the cessation of its printing in 2018-19 provides valuable context for readers. It highlights the RBI's goal to ensure an adequate supply of currency in other denominations.

Maimul Safui | Howrah

HC STOPPED FROM HOLDING MEETING

Sir — High Commissioner, Vikram Doraiswami, was reported to have been stopped from entering a Gurdwara by Khalistani extremists in Glasgow. It is shocking and outrageous. It is an insult to us. Of late, the rising of anti-India forces on foreign soil is a matter of concern. Reports of desecration of temples in Canada, Australia, the USA, and the UK are on the rise. The breeding of terror on foreign soil is unacceptable. It needs to be condemned. Respective governments should not allow such unlawful activities on their soil. India should take up the matter at the highest political level.

Sravana Ramachandran | Chennai

Tourism as a green investment for the future

Green investments in the tourism sector are needed for sustainable economy that strikes a balance between growth growth and environmental protection



BIJU DHARMAPALAN

Tourism is intricately connected with aesthetics. Aesthetics in the context of tourism refers to the appreciation and experience of beauty, whether it's in natural landscapes, architectural marvels, cultural expressions, or artistic creations. It is the only sector where the public wants nature to be preserved, unlike other sectors where people support the destruction in the name of development.

Tourism is the pillar of our economy. In the year 2021, the travel and tourism sector in India made a substantial contribution of approximately 178 billion US dollars to the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In the year 2017, the nation experienced the arrival of more than ten million international tourists, resulting in a substantial influx of foreign currency amounting to approximately 27.31 billion USD. The power of tourism is enormous. In many states tourism is the backbone of the rural economy generating employment opportunities for thousands. But many

times tourists act as a destructive force in polluting the environment. We can see plastic bottles and bags floating in the Dal Lake. To promote global awareness of the importance of tourism and its social, cultural, political, and economic value World Tourism Day is celebrated on September 27th under the auspices of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). Each year, World Tourism Day is celebrated on a specific theme, chosen by the UNWTO, to highlight different aspects of the tourism industry. These themes often revolve around current global issues, trends, and challenges facing the tourism sector. The designated theme for the year 2023 is "Tourism and Green Investments". This emphasises



the necessity for increased and more precise allocations of resources towards the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN.

When we mention green investment in tourism, we're talking about building and taking care of places that are friendly to the environment. This involves things like eco-friendly hotels and lodges, and using less polluting vehicles like electric or hybrid cars. Tourism and green investment are interconnected in several important ways. Green investment in the context of tourism refers to allocating financial resources towards sustainable and environmentally friendly practices within the tourism industry.

This can involve initiatives that aim to minimize negative environmental impacts, conserve natural resources, and promote sustainable development.

Tourism and biodiversity conservation are closely linked, and when managed responsibly, tourism can play a significant role in the protection and preservation of natural ecosystems and biodiversity. For this, we have to

take the local community into confidence. Usually, people in rural places want their place to develop like a metros. They forget that changing the geography will badly affect their economic prosperity. Engaging local communities in tourism activities can lead to a sense of ownership and stewardship over natural resources. When communities see direct benefits from conservation efforts, they are more likely to be supportive.

Ultimately, green investments in the tourism sector are necessary for the creation of a sustainable and resilient economy that strikes a balance between economic growth, environmental protection, and the well-being of local communities. It incentivises a change towards more environmentally conscious and socially responsible tourism practices that are beneficial to both the natural world and the sustainable growth of the tourism industry.

(The writer is an adjunct faculty at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore; views are personal)

FIRST COLUMN

MAGIC OF MUDRA PRANAYAMA

The science of 'mudras' is intrinsically related to the esoteric knowledge of Yoga



RAVI VALLURI

The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali is a collection of sutras on the theory and practice of yoga as elucidated in his treatise. The sutras are known for their reference to Ashtanga or the eight elements of practice culminating in samadhi. The eight limbs are yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana and samadhi. Pranayama is the fourth principle of Ashtanga Yoga as delineated by Maharishi Patanjali. Pranayama should be coupled with mindful eating and breathing.

The yogic science of mudras

Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita says, "There is nothing as sacred as knowledge." Knowledge can be acquired by the human mind through the 5Ds- dedication, determination, dynamism, devotion, and discipline and one H- Humility. The human mind can harness this potential only if it is in the present moment. By practising proper breathing techniques, like Sudarshan Kriya and Nadi Shodhan pranayama and through regular meditation the mind becomes alert to delve deep into knowledge. It is indeed efficacious to learn about mudras. The practice of mudras is not just in the domain of dancers, painters, and artists, even stock individuals who have nothing to do with the art world ought to learn about mudras.

The science of mudras, is intrinsically related to the esoteric knowledge of yoga and which can be further segregated into the five elements, the five life forces (or subtle forces of energy called the pranas) and the three doshas. The five elements are namely - Akash (ether or space), Vayu (air), Agni (fire), Jal (water) and Prithvi (earth), and the five life forces or pranas are prana, udana, samana, apana and vyana and the three doshas are vata, kapha and pitta. Humans unconsciously practice mudras. For instance, a young child begins learning to walk with his thumbs raised



which is called the Meru Dand mudra. An infant in a deep slumber, his index finger would involuntarily touch the thumb and the other three fingers are on the base of the palm (Chinmaya mudra). The universe in its auto-mode conjures these processes to take place. We are oblivious to the occurrence. Some other mudras which need to be practised are:

- (a) **Jnana mudra**
This is performed to increase brain power, improve memory and for the removal of negative thoughts. Thereby one attains peace and bliss.
- (b) **Prithvi mudra**
This helps in balancing the five sense organs, improves blood circulation and enhances our energy levels. Practising this mudra assists in increasing our alertness.
- (c) **Apana mudra**
This facilitates an improved elimination process, revitalizing the digestive system, improving the gums and strengthening immunity.
- (d) **Prana mudra**
This mudra addresses the problem of fatigue; it provides essential vitamins to the body besides increasing stamina and vigour. It also helps in maintaining the health of our eyes.
- (e) **Dhyana mudra**
Essentially, this mudra helps in making us mindful and wakeful. Over a period, we attain peace of mind.
- (f) **Shunya Vayu mudra**
The practice of this mudra helps in combating problems of flatulence and gastric ailments. The gut houses our solar plexus, which is also referred to as the second brain. We need to take adequate care of our abdomen as most human ailments arise from this part of the body. Thus, there is enormous merit and wisdom in the adage, that your health is in your hands.
(Ravi Valluri is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. and is a faculty of the Art of Living; views expressed are personal)

India's space Odyssey: To Moon and beyond



UTTAM CHAKRABORTY

India has taken a formidable lead in Moon exploration, though it would be a while before Moon's resources would be available for development purposes

India is riding high on the success of India's Chandrayaan-3, which scripted a glorious history worldwide. It is not only a matter of national pride but has larger implications on varied dimensions. It has opened up further deliberations on technological capability, resource exploration, international collaboration, scientific contributions, space exploration and diplomacy, geopolitical landscape, global leadership and cooperation.

The success of Chandrayaan-3 has redefined the relationship between national prestige and technological capability. Successfully launching and operating a lunar mission showcases a country's technological prowess and capabilities. It can boost national pride and reputation on a global stage, potentially influencing how other countries perceive and engage with that nation. International collaboration is now buzzing around. Lunar missions often involve collaboration with other countries and space agencies. The use of space missions, including lunar explorations, as a means of advancing diplomatic ties is referred to as space diplomacy. The development of international partnerships for space exploration can open up chances for discussions, disagreements, and alliances with other nations, potentially having more significant geopolitical repercussions. These partnerships can foster diplomatic ties and strengthen international relationships, leading to potential geopolitical advantages.

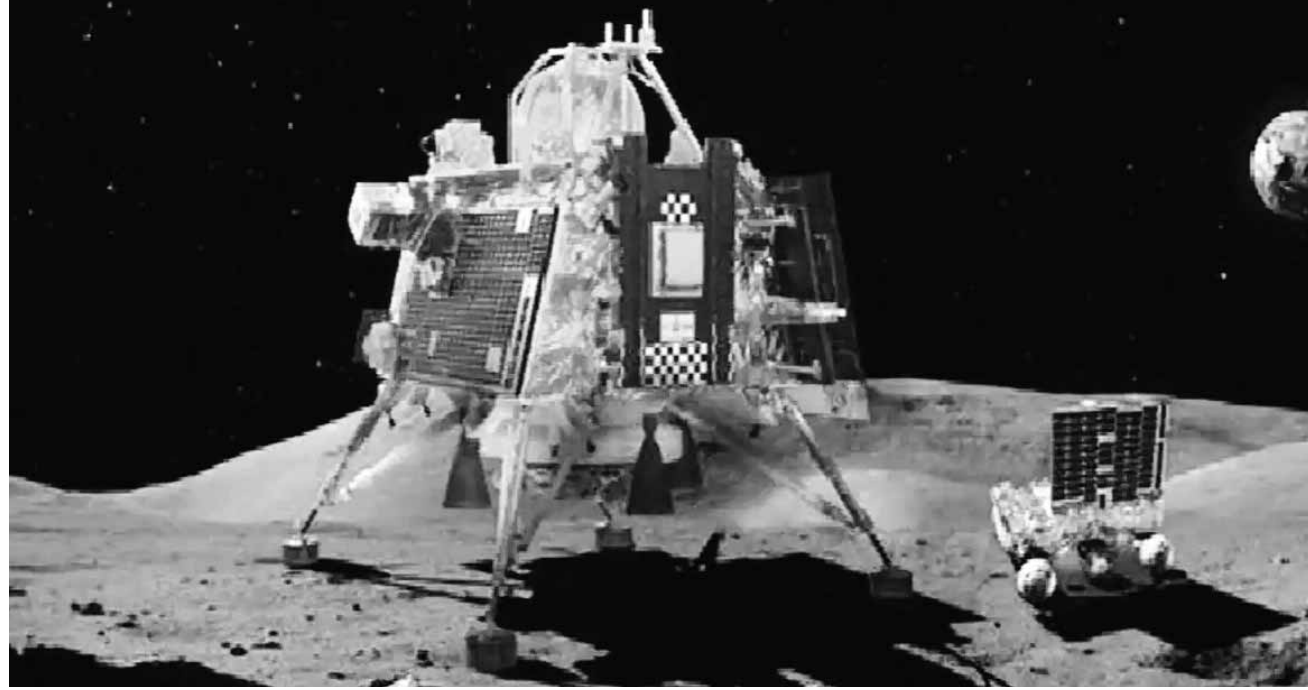
SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS

Without scientific contributions, India's mission could not have been possible. Lunar missions contribute to scientific advancements by conducting experiments and collecting data about the Moon's geology, atmosphere, and other characteristics. Sharing such data and findings can position a country as a leader in scientific research and innovation. Resource Exploration is another area that can be discounted in India's journey in space. If future lunar missions, including Chandrayaan missions, discover valuable resources on the Moon, such as rare minerals or water ice, they could have significant economic implications.

SPACE VOYAGE & GEOPOLITICS

Control or access to these resources could influence a country's geopolitical standing. The ability to conduct space missions, including lunar missions, can be used as a tool for diplomacy. It can open channels for negotiations, discussions, and partnerships with other nations interested in space exploration, which can have broader geopolitical implications. Furthermore, a long-running space race may pick up speed in response to the successful lunar mission, which follows Russia's failure. India became the first nation to land a spacecraft on the south pole of the moon. As the Chandrayaan-3 spacecraft successfully touched down on the lunar south pole last week, India became just the fourth nation to perform a soft landing on the moon. That area of the moon has not yet been visited by any other country. The trajectory of the Chandrayaan-3, which blasted off from southern India more than a month ago, has captured the attention of the Indian public and dominated headlines for days.

Soft Power Projection is something that India is going to capitalize on. Successfully



THE UNITED STATES, RUSSIA, CHINA, JAPAN, AND FRANCE ARE JUST A FEW OF THE NATIONS THAT HAVE CONGRATULATED INDIA ON CHANDRAYAAN-3'S SUCCESSFUL LANDING

(The writer is HoD-Digital Marketing and Associate Professor at the School of Management, Presidency University Bangalore, views are personal)

conducting ambitious space missions can enhance a country's soft power - its ability to influence others through cultural, technological, and scientific achievements. The successful completion of ambitious space missions has the potential to increase a country's soft power, which is defined as its ability to sway others through achievements in the arts, sciences, and technology. This phenomenon can help to shape how people view the country and have an effect on how well-known it is abroad. This can create a positive image of the country and influence how it is perceived by the international community.

Launching lunar missions requires the development of advanced technology, infrastructure, and skilled workforce. These developments can have a positive impact on the country's overall technological capabilities and economic growth, indirectly affecting its geopolitical position. Precisely, this achievement will enhance the infrastructure and capability building. Now, global leadership and cooperation have come to the fore for further discussions. If a country like India successfully conducts lunar missions, it could position itself as a leader in space exploration, especially within the developing world. This leadership role can lead to collaborations and alliances, shaping geopolitical dynamics. A nation like India has the potential to become a leader in space exploration if its lunar missions are carried out successfully, especially among developing nations. This particular leadership position has the potential to promote alliances and partnerships.

A long-running space race may be accelerated by the Chandrayaan-3 mission, ushering in a new stage of great power competition. Russia and India, who are allies on Earth, have been vying to be the first nation to set foot on the lunar south pole; a Russian attempt was a failed one. The presence of water raises the

possibility that other nations could use the region of the lunar south pole as a base for further space exploration in the future. The United States established the Artemis Accords in 2020, which seek to foster space cooperation through shared rules and principles, possibly in anticipation of such competition. Several allies and partners, including India, joined. Russia and China have not. The way people on Earth view the moon—and beyond—could change as geopolitical competition in space is set to heat up.

MOON ECONOMY

Limiting climate change's harmful effects and ensuring a transition to sustainable energy sources have become the two biggest problems the world community has been facing recently. The lack of critical minerals, which are crucial elements of the transition to renewable energy, as studies suggest, makes the transition less seamless than anticipated. Considering the moon economy's importance and potential sources for these essential minerals is necessary in this context. Along with this, a country typically gains a tactical advantage from a space mission when operationalizing satellite communication, in addition to a variety of other benefits. This includes enabling and supplying consistent satellite data, which aids in forecasting many things, including the monsoon and can greatly aid defence forces in maintaining surveillance on other nations.

The moon is a rich source of raw materials, so it should be noted that this will be a geopolitical region where future conflict and cooperation may occur. It is necessary to take a comprehensive look at the essential minerals that have grown in significance recently. According to an ISRO study, the Moon, especially the South Pole, is currently home to enormous amounts of water. A significant amount of hydro-energy could be

produced if this were to be investigated.

Similar to this, a report by Popular Science Magazine titled "The elements we might mine on the moon" suggests the presence of other critical minerals, including plutonium and helium 3, which can be used for the fusion of nuclear energy, as well as cobalt, lithium, titanium, and other critical minerals. In a similar vein, the Energy Information Administration, in its numerous reports, has made predictions of these vital minerals that can be sourced for the RE sector.

The countries that establish bases on the moon first will have the first-mover advantage to benefit from a variety of space projects and businesses on and around the Moon. The geopolitics of lunar colonialism are still unknown, but we do know that they will have an impact on world politics. In a few decades, India may be one of the few nations in charge of the largest portion of the moon economy. A PwC report states that the lunar economy encompasses all of the activities involved in the production, use, and exchange of lunar resources on the Moon's surface, in lunar orbit, and on Earth.

The United States, Russia, China, Japan, and France are just a few of the nations that have congratulated India on Chandrayaan-3's successful landing. These nations are all interested in space exploration and are probably closely observing India's development.

These responses demonstrate the widespread acclaim and admiration that India has received for its performance on Chandrayaan-3. It is a significant accomplishment for India and evidence of its expanding space exploration capabilities.

Other nations may be inspired to pursue their space exploration programs as a result. Now, the moon is India's ventured place. Let's wait and watch on the world's relations with India to shape up the journey in the space.

Growing need for awareness about mental health

Approximately every fifth person across the globe experiences mental health issues at some point during his lifespan

In 1992 the World Federation of Mental Health recognised the need to be more vocal about mental health issues as people with mental illness often suffer silently, fearing social stigma, lack of understanding and discrimination.

Approximately every fifth person across the globe experiences mental health issues at some point during their entire lifespan. While Depression and Anxiety disorders are the most common mental health conditions, suicide is one of the leading causes of premature and untimely deaths. It is a serious concern for mental health professionals for timely intervention. The space of student suicides in Kota (Rajasthan) speaks volumes of the gravity of the situation and



RC JILOHA

(The writer is a retired professor of psychiatry from the University of Delhi and Jamia Hamdard, views are personal)

the urgent need to address the issue.

Mental health refers to overall mental well-being, a holistic concept that is also about physical and social well-being. Promotion of mental health through understanding, support, and access to mental health resources is crucial to de-stigmatizing mental illness and breaking down the negative attitudes and beliefs surrounding it.

Unfortunately, public health developments during recent years have adversely impacted the mental health of elderly and the children alike. It becomes important to make children understand that sound mental health is vital to their emotional development. It is evident from the studies that since the COVID-19 pandemic began, more children are reporting higher levels of anxiety and depression than ever before. That makes now the perfect time to break down the stigma connected with mental illness by openly discussing the issue.

The recent United Nations Human Rights Report highlights that people with mental health conditions and those with psychosocial disabilities experience disproportionately higher rates of poor physical health and reduced life expectancy. Discrimination, harmful stereotypes and stigma in the community, family, schools and the workplace prevent meaningful relationships, quality social interactions and the inclusive environments needed for the well-being of individuals with mental illness. These issues hurt a person's ability to cope with life situations.

There is a need to educate the public to create a society where everyone feels comfortable seeking help and support without prejudice and discrimination. It is the responsibility and obligation of the State and the global organizations to ensure access to mental health services, which can no longer be ignored. Access to better living conditions, security, food, shelter and housing are all human rights issues necessary for people's mental health. Mental health is a universal right of all citizens of the world and consistent with the 1948 founding principles of the World Federation of Mental Health (WFMH).

accepting and supportive society can be created where the mentally ill stay included in the larger society with comfort and confidence. Active participation in the events that support World Mental Health Day such as walks, runs, workshops, or panel discussions helps create awareness and clarify misconceptions that often prevent people from seeking available help. Donations to the organization or charity that provides resources and support to those struggling with mental health issues must be made. Devoting and investing time and working voluntarily with the welfare organizations that support mental health can go a long way in creating awareness within a community. Money is needed to carry out these

activities for which funds can be raised by organizing one's event or participating in a fund-raising challenge. One also needs to self-educate about mental health and the various issues surrounding it through reading books, attending workshops, or simply having conversations with others or following some of the social media accounts that provide genuine information. This year's theme highlights a range of issues to involve a variety of stakeholders and global citizens to work together to ensure that a clear message is delivered and an effective campaign to support World Mental Health Day 2023 is carried out on 10th October, particularly when we celebrate WFMH's 75th Anniversary year.

Mental Health Day reaffirms every year the commitments made and the action taken. While last year's World Mental Health Day theme was 'Make mental health and well-being for all a global priority', 2023's theme is to celebrate the power of community kindness.

Mental Health Day 2023 is an opportunity for people and communities to renew their commitment to the theme 'Mental health is a universal human right' to improve knowledge, raise awareness and drive actions that promote and protect everyone's mental health as a universal human right. Mental health must be placed in a human rights framework to re-cast the aspiration for sound mental health as a fundamental human right. By doing so a better, more

needed to carry out these

Govt shutdown averted as Biden signs funding

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The threat of a federal government shutdown suddenly lifted late Saturday as President Joe Biden signed a temporary funding bill to keep agencies open with little time to spare after Congress rushed to approve the bipartisan deal.

The package drops aid to Ukraine, a White House priority opposed by a growing number of GOP lawmakers, but increases federal disaster assistance by USD 16 billion, meeting Biden's full request. The bill funds government until Nov. 17. After chaotic days of turmoil in the House, Speaker Kevin McCarthy abruptly abandoned demands for steep spending cuts from his right flank and instead relied on Democrats to pass the bill, at risk to his own job. The Senate followed with final passage closing a whirlwind day at the Capitol.

"This is good news for the American people," Biden said in a statement.

He also said the United States "cannot under any circumstances allow American support for Ukraine to be interrupted" and expected McCarthy "will keep his commitment to the people of Ukraine and



secure passage of the support needed to help Ukraine in this critical moment."

It's been a sudden head-spinning turn of events in Congress ahead of the midnight funding deadline after grueling days in the House pushed the government to the brink of a disruptive federal shutdown.

The outcome ends, for now, the threat of a shutdown, but the reprieve may be short-lived. Congress will again need to fund the government in coming weeks risking a crisis as views are hardening, particularly among the right-flank lawmakers whose demands were ultimately swept aside this time in favor of a more bipartisan approach.

"We're going to do our job," McCarthy, R-Calif., said before

the House vote. "We're going to be adults in the room. And we're going to keep government open."

If no deal was in place before Sunday, federal workers would have faced furloughs, more than 2 million active-duty and reserve military troops would have had to work without pay and programs and services that Americans rely on from coast to coast would have begun to face shutdown disruptions.

"It has been a day full of twists and turns, but the American people can breathe a sigh of relief: There will be no government shutdown," said Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y.

The package funds government at current 2023 levels until mid-November, and also extends other provisions, including for the Federal Aviation Administration. The package was approved by the House 335-91, with most Republicans and almost all Democrats supporting. Senate passage came by an 88-9 vote.

But the loss of Ukraine aid was devastating for lawmakers of both parties vowing to support President Volodymyr Zelenskyy after his recent Washington visit. The Senate

bill included \$6 billion for Ukraine, and both chambers came to a standstill Saturday as lawmakers assessed their options.

"The American people deserve better," said House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York, warning in a lengthy floor speech that "extreme" Republicans were risking a shutdown. For the House package to be approved, McCarthy was forced to rely on Democrats because the speaker's hard-right flank has said it will oppose any short-term funding measure, denying him the votes needed from his slim majority. It's a move that is sure to intensify calls for his ouster.

After leaving the conservative holdouts behind, McCarthy is almost certain to be facing a motion to try to remove him from office, though it is not at all certain there would be enough votes to topple the speaker. Most Republicans voted for the package Saturday while 90 opposed.

"If somebody wants to remove me because I want to be the adult in the room, go ahead and try," McCarthy said of the threat to oust him. "But I think this country is too important."

The White House was tracking the developments on

Capitol Hill and aides were briefing the president, who was spending the weekend in Washington. Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell, who has championed Ukraine aid despite resistance from his own ranks, is expected to keep pursuing US support for Kyiv in the fight against Russia.

"I have agreed to keep fighting for more economic and security aid for Ukraine," McConnell, R-Ky., said before the vote.

Late at night, the Senate stalled when Sen. Michael Bennet, D-Colo., held up the vote, seeking assurances Ukraine funds would be reconsidered. "I know important moments are like this, for the United States, to lead the rest of the world," Bennet said, noting his mother was born in Poland in 1938 and survived the Holocaust. "We can't fail." The House's quick pivot comes after the collapse Friday of McCarthy's earlier plan to pass a Republican-only bill with steep spending cuts up to 30% to most government agencies and strict border provisions that the White House and Democrats rejected as too extreme. A faction of 21 hard-right Republican holdouts opposed it. "Our options are

slipping away every minute," said one senior Republican, Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart of Florida. The federal government had been heading straight into a shutdown that posed grave uncertainty for federal workers in states all across America and the people who depend on them — from troops to border control agents to office workers, scientists and others.

Families that rely on Head Start for children, food benefits and countless other programs large and small were confronting potential interruptions or outright closures. At the airports, Transportation Security Administration officers and air traffic controllers had been expected to work without pay, but travelers could have faced delays in updating their U.S. passports or other travel documents. The White House has brushed aside McCarthy's overtures to meet with Biden after the speaker walked away from the debt deal they brokered earlier this year that set budget levels. Catering to his hard-right flank, McCarthy had made multiple concessions including returning to the spending limits the conservatives demanded back in January as part of the deal-making to help him become the House speaker.

Suicide bomber detonates device in Turkiye

AP ■ ANKARA

A suicide bomber detonated an explosive device in the heart of the Turkish capital, Ankara, on Sunday. A second assailant was killed in a shootout with police, the interior minister said.

The attack occurred hours before Parliament was set to reopen after its three-month summer recess with an address by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Two police officers were slightly injured during the attack near an entrance to the Ministry of Interior Affairs, minister Ali Yerlikaya said on X, the social media platform formerly known as Twitter. The assailants arrived at the scene inside a light commercial vehicle.

"Our heroic police officers, through their intuition, resisted the terrorists as soon as they got out of the vehicle," Yerlikaya later told reporters. "One of them blew himself up while the other one was shot in the head before he had a chance to blow himself up."

"Our fight against terrorism, their collaborators, the (drug) dealers, gangs and organized crime organisations will continue with more determination," he said. The minister did not say who was behind the attack and there was no immediate claim of responsibility.

Kurdish and far-left militant groups as well as the Islamic State group have carried out deadly attacks throughout the country in the past. Last year, a bomb blast in

a bustling pedestrian street in Istanbul left six people dead, including two children.

More than 80 others were wounded. Turkiye blamed the attack on the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, as well as Syrian Kurdish groups affiliated with it.

Security camera footage on Sunday showed a vehicle stopping in front of the ministry, with a man exiting it and rushing toward the entrance of the building before blowing himself up. A second man is seen following him.

Earlier, television footage showed bomb squads working near a vehicle in the area, which is located near the Turkish Grand National Assembly and other government buildings. A rocket launcher could be seen lying near the vehicle.

Turkish authorities later imposed a temporary blackout on images from the scene. Justice Minister Yilmaz Tunc said an investigation has been launched into the "terror attack."

"These attacks will in no way hinder Turkiye's fight against terrorism," he wrote on X. "Our fight against terrorism will continue with more determination."

Police cordoned off access to the city center and increased security measures, warning citizens that they would be conducting controlled explosions of suspicious packages. The two police officers were being treated in a hospital and were not in serious condition, Yerlikaya said.



Turkish security forces cordon off an area after an explosion in Ankara, Sunday. A suicide bomber detonated an explosive device in the heart of the Turkish capital, Ankara, on Sunday, hours before parliament was scheduled to reopen after a summer recess. A second assailant was killed in a shootout with police. AP/PTI

Pak Army chief vows to eliminate terrorism

Islamabad (PTI): Pakistan's Army chief General Syed Asim Munir has vowed to eliminate the menace of terrorism from the country through "unabated" military operations against militants following Friday's twin suicide attacks that have killed 65 people.

A total of 60 people were killed and more than 60 others were injured in a grisly suicide blast on Friday in Balochistan that targeted a procession to celebrate Prophet Muhammad's birthday near the Madina Masjid in Mastung, an official said.

In the second bomb attack that took place in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Hangu, targeting a police station's mosque, five people were killed, and 12 others were injured as the mosque's roof collapsed in the explosion's impact, it said.

The Chief of Army Staff visited Quetta on Saturday where he was briefed on recent terrorist attacks, the Army's media wing said in a statement on Saturday night.

Munir said that the heretics who have nothing to do with Islam were carrying out such attacks with the "backing of state sponsors of terrorism."

"These terrorists and their facilitators, having no link with religion and ideology, are proxies of the enemies of Pakistan and its people," he said, without giving more details.

The Army chief added: "These forces of evil will continue to face the full might of the state and security forces backed by a resilient nation."

"Our operation against terrorists would continue unabated and the Armed Forces, Intelligence and Law Enforcement Agencies shall not rest till the menace of terrorism is rooted out from the country."

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack in Balochistan so far however, the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), responsible for some of the bloodiest attacks in Pakistan, denied its involvement.

Serbia's prez denies troop build-up near Kosovo

AP ■ BELGRADE (SERBIA)

Serbia's president on Sunday denied US and other reports of a military buildup along the border with Kosovo, complaining of a "campaign of lies" against his country in the wake of a shootout a week earlier that killed four people and fuelled tensions in the volatile Balkan region.

Both the United States and the European Union expressed concern earlier this week about what they said was an increased military deployment by Serbia's border with its former province, and they urged Belgrade to scale down its troop presence there.

Kosovo's government said on Saturday it was monitoring the movements of the Serbian military from "three different directions".

It urged Serbia to immediately pull back its troops and demilitarise the border area. "A campaign of lies ... has been launched against our Serbia," President Aleksandar Vucic responded in a video post on Instagram.



"They have lied a lot about the presence of our military forces ... In fact, they are bothered that Serbia has what they describe as sophisticated weapons." Tensions have soared following the violence in northern Kosovo last Sunday involving heavily armed Serb gunmen and Kosovo police officers.

The clash was one of the

worst since Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in 2008 and prompted NATO to announce it would beef up a peacekeeping force stationed in the country.

Serbia has denied Kosovo's allegations that it trained the group of some 30 men who opened fire on police officers, leaving one dead, and then barricaded

themselves in an Orthodox Christian monastery in northern Kosovo. Three insurgents died in the hours-long shootout that ensued. Kosovo has also said it was investigating possible Russian involvement in the violence. Serbia is Russia's main ally in Europe, and there are fears in the West that Moscow could try to stir trouble in the Balkans to divert attention from the war in Ukraine.

John Kirby, spokesman for the White House National Security Council, said on Friday that US officials were monitoring a large deployment of Serbian troops along the border with Kosovo, describing it as an "unprecedented staging of advanced Serbian artillery, tanks and mechanized infantry units".

Vucic has several times over the past months raised the combat readiness level of Serbian troops on the border with Kosovo.

Serbia also has been reinforcing its troops with weapons and other equip-

ment mainly purchased from Russia and China.

"We will continue to invest in the defense of our country but Serbia wants peace," the president said on Sunday. "Everything they said they made up and lied, and they knew they were making up and lying." Last weekend's shootout near the village of Banjska followed months of tensions in Kosovo's north, where ethnic Serbs are a majority of the population and have demanded self-rule.

Dozens of soldiers from the NATO-led peacekeeping force known as KFOR were injured in May in a clash with ethnic Serbs protesting the Kosovo police presence in the area.

Fearing wider instability as the war rages in Ukraine, Washington and Brussels have sought to negotiate a normalisation of relations between Serbia and Kosovo, but the two sides have failed to implement a tentative agreement that was recently reached as part of an EU-mediated dialogue.

Azerbaijan issues arrest warrant against former separatist leader

AP ■ YEREVAN

Azerbaijan's prosecutor general issued an arrest warrant for ex-Nagorno-Karabakh leader Arayik Harutyunyan on Sunday as the first United Nations mission to visit the region in three decades arrived in the former breakaway state.

Harutyunyan led the breakaway region, which is internationally recognised as part of Azerbaijan but was largely populated by ethnic Armenians, between May 2020 and last month, when the separatist government said it would dissolve itself by the end of the year after a three-decade bid for independence.

Azerbaijani police arrested one of Harutyunyan's former prime ministers, Ruben

Vardanyan, on Wednesday as he tried to cross into Armenia along with tens of thousands of others who have fled following Baku's 24-hour blitz last week to reclaim control of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Harutyunyan and the enclave's former military commander, Jalal Harutyunyan, are accused of firing missiles on Azerbaijan's third-largest city, Ganja, during a 44-day war in late 2020, local media reported.

The clash between the Azerbaijani military and Nagorno Karabakh forces led to the deployment of Russian peacekeepers in the region.

The arrest warrant announcement by Prosecutor General Kamran Aliyev reflects Azerbaijan's intention

to quickly and forcefully enforce its grip on the region following three decades of conflict with the separatist state.

While Baku has pledged to respect the rights of ethnic Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh, many have fled due to fear of reprisals or losing the freedom to use their language and to practice their religion and cultural customs. In a briefing Sunday, Armenia's presidential press secretary, Nazeli Baghdasaryan, said that 100,483 people had already arrived in Armenia from Nagorno-Karabakh, which had a population of about 120,000 before Azerbaijan's offensive.

Some people lined up for days to escape the region because the only route to

Armenia — a winding mountain road — became jammed with slow-moving vehicles.

A United Nations delegation arrived in Nagorno-Karabakh Sunday to monitor the situation. The mission is the organization's first to the region for three decades, due to the "very complicated and delicate geopolitical situation" there, UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric told reporters Friday. Local officials dismissed the visit as a formality. Hunan Tadevosyan, spokesperson for Nagorno-Karabakh's emergency services, said the UN representatives had come too late and the number of civilians left in the regional capital of Stepanakert could be "counted on one hand."

Scotland gurdwara condemns Khalistani extremists

PTI ■ LONDON

The gurdwara in Scotland, which was the scene of disruption by Khalistani extremists who blocked a planned visit of Indian High Commissioner to the UK Vikram Doraiswami, has strongly condemned the "disorderly behaviour" and said that the local police are investigating the matter.

In a statement issued on Saturday night, the Glasgow Gurdwara Guru Granth Sahib Sikh Sabha said the "unknown" and "unruly" individuals disturbed the peace at a place of worship and attempted to disrupt the personal visit of the envoy facilitated by a member of the Scottish Parliament.

It followed the High

Commission of India in London's statement that said the UK Foreign Office and Metropolitan Police have been upraised of the "disgraceful incident" after violent force was also used at the diplomat's car during the disruption on Friday afternoon.

"Certain unknown individuals from outside the Glasgow area attempted to disrupt the visit, following which the visiting party decided to leave the premises," the gurdwara statement noted. "After the departure of the visitors, these unruly individuals continued to disturb the gurdwara congregation. Police Scotland was in attendance thereafter and have taken cognisance of the matter. "Glasgow Gurdwara strongly condemns such dis-

orderly behaviour to disrupt the peaceful proceedings of a Sikh place of worship. The Gurdwara is open to people from all communities and backgrounds, and we welcome everyone openly as per our principles of faith," it said.

Earlier on Saturday, the Indian High Commission said that three people from areas outside Scotland disrupted the planned interaction to discuss community and consular issues.

One of the three radical elements attempted to "violently force open the HC's car door" and it was due to the quick reaction of one of the organisers, who physically intervened at the car door, that a "bigger incident was avoided."

Contemporary retelling of 'Mahabharata' premieres on London stage

PTI ■ LONDON

A new contemporary retelling of the 'Mahabharata' opens in London on Sunday, incorporating several Indian musical and dance art forms and bringing together a worldwide cast of characters.

The UK premiere of the musical extravaganza, which runs at the Barbican Theatre until next weekend, follows a critically acclaimed world premiere in Canada by Toronto-based Why Not Theatre and Indian-origin co-creators Miriam Fernandes and Ravi Jain.

The production is setting out in two parts: Karma setting the origin story of the rival Pandava and Kaurava

clans and Dharma capturing a great battle that destroys the planet leaving the survivors behind to rebuild.

"The two parts are bridged by a community meal, which is called 'Khana and Kahani'. So, if you do the whole experience it's a seven-hour journey; and we start all the way from Bheeshma's vow at the very beginning of the story and we go through to the war until Yudhishtir goes to heaven," said Fernandes, Why Not Theatre Co-Artistic Director who also plays the narrator in the production.

"We are a small strand among a great lineage of storytellers who have weaved this epic of the 'Mahabharata' over the ages. These stories have been passed from storyteller to



audience for thousands of years and span the earth, travelling in the memories and imaginations of the South Asian diaspora.

"Though first composed in an ancient time, the themes of greed, revenge, ecocide and privilege feel acutely relevant in our globalised world," she said. Almost 40 years since Peter

Brook's legendary international production of the great Sanskrit epic, Why Not Theatre's adaptation also explores the act of storytelling itself.

The staging evolves from ancient and intimate — a storyteller around a fire and classical Kathakali dance — to a

modern spectacle with projection, dynamic soundscapes and poetic stage design.

There is also a new opera for the most revered portion of the epic, the 'Bhagavad Gita', with a live onstage band creating the musical score featuring traditional instruments such as Lord Krishna's favourite flute.

"We spent a lot of time looking at how to contemporise this, especially as values have changed in such a big way, and culturally values clash. Canadian culture is very different from Indian culture," said Jain, Founder of Why Not Theatre and co-writer of the production.

"One of the ways that we addressed the issue was we really have been conscious about our casting, with women

playing some men roles. So, women find themselves in the story in a very different way than they are traditionally portrayed. The casting is really exciting," he said.

Jain, whose parents hail from Delhi, launched Why Not Theatre in 2007 with a show featuring his mother's not-very-successful attempts at arranging his marriage. Since then, the company has grown in its mission to tell diaspora stories and challenge the status quo.

"As a student in London, I watched the world masters dazzle audiences on the Barbican stage. Twenty years later it's a dream come true to share this complex work we're so proud of at this truly special venue," added Jain.

24 Pak beggars held

Lahore (PTI): Twenty-four alleged Pakistani beggars disguised as pilgrims were offloaded from Saudi Arabia-bound flights and arrested for trying to travel to the Gulf Kingdom to indulge in begging, according to a media report on Sunday.

The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) late on Saturday night offloaded eight alleged beggars in the disguise of Umrah pilgrims from a Saudi Arabia-bound flight at the Multan airport, Dawn newspaper reported. This was the second incident in as many days at the Multan airport in Punjab province. Two days ago, the FIA offloaded 16 persons, including a child, 11 women and four men,

from a Saudi-bound flight at the Multan airport. They

were travelling on Umrah visas. The Umrah is an Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca that can be undertaken at any time of the year.

According to a statement issued by FIA immigration officer Tariq Mehmood after the second incident, it transpired during the immigration that the group was travelling to Saudi Arabia for the "purpose of begging".

"They said they would beg there and half of the begged amount would be handed over to the sub-agent," the FIA statement said, adding that statements of the group along with their passports were seized and the said passengers were sent to FIAs Anti Human Trafficking and Smuggling Wing in Multan for further legal action.

Populist ex-premier leads his party to victory

AP ■ PRAGUE

A populist former prime minister and his leftist party have won early parliamentary elections in Slovakia, staging a political comeback after campaigning on a pro-Russian and anti-American message, according to almost complete results.

Former Prime Minister Robert Fico and the leftist Smer, or Direction, party had 22.9 per cent of the votes, the Slovak Statistics Office said early Sunday after counting 99.98 per cent of the votes from some 6,000 polling stations.

Saturday's election was a test for the small eastern European country's support for neighboring Ukraine in its war with Russia, and the win by Fico could strain a fragile unity in the European Union and NATO. Fico, 59, has vowed to withdraw Slovakia's military support for Ukraine in Russia's war if his attempt to return to power succeeds.

The country of 5.5 million

people created in 1993 following the breakup of Czechoslovakia has been a staunch supporter of Ukraine since Russia invaded last February, donating arms and opening the borders for refugees fleeing the war.

Slovakia has delivered to Ukraine its fleet of the Soviet-era MiG-29 fighter jets, the S-300 air defense system, helicopters, armoured vehicles and much-needed demining equipment. The current caretaker government is planning to send Ukraine artillery ammunition and to train Ukrainian service members in demining.

Winning approval for sending more arms to Ukraine is getting more difficult in many countries.

In the US Congress, a bill to avert a government shutdown in Washington, DC, excluded President Joe Biden's request to provide more security assistance to the war-torn nation.

In other countries, including Germany, France, and

SLOVAKIA ELECTIONS

Spain, populist parties skeptical of intervention in Ukraine also command significant support.

Many of these countries have national or regional elections coming up that could tip the balance of popular opinion away from Kyiv and toward Moscow. With no party winning a majority of seats in Slovakia, a coalition government will need to be formed.

The president traditionally asks an election's winner to try to form a government, so Fico is likely to become prime minister again. He served as prime minister in 2006-2010 and again in 2012-2018.

A liberal, pro-West newcomer, the Progressive Slovakia party, was second, with 18 per cent of the votes.

Its leader Michal Simecka, who is deputy president of the European Parliament, said his party respected the result. "But it's bad news for Slovakia," he

doesn't mean such a coalition can't be created," he said.

Another potential coalition partner, the ultranationalist Slovak National Party, a clear pro-Russian group, received 5.6 per cent. Those three parties would have a parliamentary majority if they joined forces in a coalition government.

Fico opposes EU sanctions on Russia, questions whether Ukraine can force out the invading Russian troops and wants to block Ukraine from joining NATO.

He proposes that instead of sending arms to Kyiv, the EU and the US should use their influence to force Russia and Ukraine to strike a compromise peace deal. Fico's critics worry that his return to power could lead Slovakia to abandon its course in other ways, following the path of Hungary under Prime Minister Viktor Orban and to a lesser extent of Poland under the Law and Justice party.

"It can't be ruled out that he will be looking for a partner

who uses similar rhetoric, and the partner will be Viktor Orban," said Radoslav Stefancik, an analyst from the University of Economics in Bratislava. Orban welcomed Fico's victory.

"Always good to work together with a patriot," he posted on X, the former Twitter. "Looking forward to it!"

Hungary has been sanctioned by the EU for alleged rule-of-law violations and corruption, while EU institutions say Poland has been on a slippery slope away from the EU's rule-of-law principles.

Fico has threatened to dismiss investigators from the National Criminal Agency and the special prosecutor who deals with the most serious crimes and corruption.

Hungary also has — uniquely among EU countries — maintained close relations with Moscow and argued against supplying arms to Ukraine or providing it with economic assistance.

2 terrorists, 1 cop killed in attack on patrolling post in Pak's Punjab

Lahore (PTI): Pakistan's security forces on Sunday claimed to have thwarted a terror attack on a police post in Punjab province, killing two most-wanted terrorists of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

One policeman also died in the attack on the Kundal patrolling post in Mianwali during the early hours of Sunday, Punjab police chief Usman Anwar said in a statement. "Kundal Punjab Highway Patrolling Post, Mianwali (some 300kms from Lahore), in an operation assisted by the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) of Punjab, police successfully thwarted an attack by 12 to 15 terrorists last night at approximately 23:45 hours," he said.

During the operation, Head Constable Haroon lost his life. Multiple terrorists sustained injuries and following a

thorough area search conducted by CTD personnel, two bodies were found, said Anwar.

"The operation concluded at 07:45 hours Sunday and it resulted in the recovery of the bodies of two terrorists. One of the terrorists has been identified as Zubair Nawaz, brother of Arshad Nawaz, the chief of TTP Tipu Group of Lakkhi Marwat," Anwar said.

Zubair was on the most-wanted list in both Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces due to his involvement in the killings of police officers, Shia Muslims and extortion activities. The second terrorist, Muhammad Khan, was also on the most-wanted terrorist list, said Anwar. At least 59 people were killed in a suicide attack in Mastung, a town 60kms from the capital city of Quetta in Balochistan province on Friday.

British training of Ukrainian soldiers could move into Ukraine

London (AP): Britain's new defence secretary has suggested that British military training of Ukrainian soldiers, which currently takes place at UK bases, could move into western Ukraine. In an interview with the Sunday Telegraph, Grant Shapps said he was in discussions with the British army about "eventually getting the training brought closer and actually into Ukraine as well".

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak was quick to rule out speculation of an imminent deployment of British soldiers to Ukraine. Shapps' suggestion was not for the "here and now", Sunak told reporters, but a possibility "for the long term".

"There are no British soldiers that will be sent to fight in the current conflict. That's not what's happening," Sunak said. Russian politicians immediately criticized the pro-

posal. Former President Dmitry Medvedev, who is deputy secretary of Russia's Security Council, claimed Shapps was actively pushing "towards a Third World War".

The British minister "will be turning his instructors into a legal target for our armed forces, knowing perfectly well that they'll be mercilessly destroyed — not as mercenaries, but as NATO specialists," Medvedev wrote on social media.

Since Russian President Vladimir Putin sent troops into Ukraine more than 19 months ago, Medvedev, a law school graduate, has emerged as one of the most hawkish Russian officials, regularly issuing blustery remarks that combine Latin mottos and legal expressions with four-letter words. Observers have interpreted Medvedev's rhetoric, which sounds

tougher than the statements of even old-time Kremlin hardliners, as an apparent attempt to curry favour with Putin.

Yury Gagin, advisor to the head of the Russian-occupied part of eastern Ukraine's Donetsk region, also dismissed Shapps' idea but without Medvedev's fiery warnings.

"Even if British instructors do organise training for Ukraine's armed forces inside Ukraine, it won't bring any results," Gagin told Russian state news agency RIA Novosti.

"Ukraine's failed counter-offensive has already shown the level of such training," he added. More than 23,500 recruits from Ukraine have received combat training at army bases across the UK since the start of 2022, receiving instruction on skills that include weapons handling and battlefield first aid.

Ukraine aid dropped from govt funding bill

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Congressional supporters of Ukraine say they won't give up after a bill to keep the federal government open excluded President Joe Biden's request to provide more security assistance to the war-torn nation. Still, many lawmakers acknowledge that winning approval for Ukraine assistance in Congress is growing more difficult as the war between Russia and Ukraine grinds on. Republican resistance to the aid has been gaining momentum in the halls of Congress.

Voting in the House this past week pointed to the potential trouble ahead. Nearly half of House Republicans voted to strip USD 300 million from a defence spending bill to train Ukrainian soldiers and purchase weapons.

The money later was approved separately, but opponents of Ukraine support cel-

ebrated their growing numbers.

Then, on Saturday, House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., omitted additional Ukraine aid from a measure to keep the government running until November 17. In doing so, he closed the door on a Senate package that would have funneled USD 6 billion to Ukraine, roughly a third of what has been requested by the White House.

Both the House and Senate overwhelmingly approved the stopgap measure, with members of both parties abandoning the increased aid for Ukraine in favour of avoiding a costly government shutdown.

The latest actions in Congress signal a gradual shift in the unwavering support that the United States has so far pledged Ukraine in its fight against Russia, and it is one of the clearest examples yet of the Republican Party's movement toward a more isolationist stance. The exclusion of

Ukraine funding came little more than a week after lawmakers met in the Capitol with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who sought to assure lawmakers that his military was winning the war, but stressed that additional aid would be crucial for continuing the fight.

After that visit, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said that one sentence summed up Zelenskyy's message in his meeting with the Senate: "If we don't get the aid, we will lose the war," Schumer said.

Yet, McCarthy, pressured by his right flank, has gone from saying "no blank checks" for Ukraine, with the focus being on accountability, to describing the Senate's approach as putting "Ukraine in front of America."

He declined to say after the vote on government funding whether he would bring aid for Ukraine up for a House vote in

the coming weeks.

"If there is a moment in time we need to have a discussion about that, we will have a discussion completely about that, but I think the administration has to make the case for what is victory," McCarthy said. Biden said in a statement after Congress averted a shutdown that "we cannot under any circumstances allow American support for Ukraine to be interrupted."

He called on McCarthy to "keep his commitment to the people of Ukraine" and push through "the support needed to help Ukraine at this critical moment."

In the Senate, both Schumer and Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky pledged to move quickly to try and pass the full White House request. But it was clear that goal will be increasingly difficult as more rank-and-file GOP senators have questioned the

aid or demanded that it be attached to immigration policy that would help secure the southern border — echoing similar demands in the House.

Florida Sen. Rick Scott, a Republican who voted for the spending bill after the Ukraine aid was stripped out, said that Congress needs to have "a conversation with the American public." He said he was optimistic after seeing the money taken out of the bill.

"In my state, people want to be helpful to Ukraine, but they also want to be helpful to Americans," Scott said. "And so they want to really understand how this money has been spent." Democrats said they were disappointed by the lack of Ukraine funding, but expressed determination that they would get the aid to the war-torn country. "We will not stop fighting for more economic and security assistance for Ukraine," Schumer said after the bill passed.

Sharif's party to approach court for bail before he arrives in Pak

Lahore (PTI): Former prime minister Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party will approach the Lahore High Court (LHC) for his bail before he arrives in the country later this month, a media report said on Sunday.

Nawaz, 73, recently said that he is excited to return to Pakistan on October 21, ending a four-year "self-imposed exile" and to lead his party in the election likely to be held in January 2024. The decision to approach the LHC for bail was taken to avoid Nawaz's arrest at Lahore airport because he was declared a proclaimed offender, Geo News reported.

It said it was unclear when the party would exactly approach the court for bail.

Citing PML-N officials, Geo News said the party's legal team would approach LHC for bail a week before the three-time prime minister's return to the country. The PML-N leaders said that the decision to approach the court was dis-

cussed with Nawaz, his younger brother Shehbaz Sharif and his daughter Maryam Nawaz in recent meetings held in London.

Citing sources, it said that a protective bail application may also be submitted in the court just two days before Nawaz's return in which it would be urged that the PML-N supremo should not be arrested for seven days and he would surrender himself before the relevant court. If the bail is approved then Nawaz would not go to jail immediately on his return home and he would also be able to address the public gathering planned at Minar-e-Pakistan grounds, sources said. PML-N President Shehbaz on Saturday said that the main goal and agenda of Nawaz will be to provide relief to the masses, rescue them from the miserable situation and eradicate economic darkness. He made the comments during a party meeting to review preparations for Nawaz's return to Pakistan.

Imran, Qureshi named 'principal accused' in cipher case

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan and his close aide Shah Mahmood Qureshi have been named "principal accused" in a case related to the alleged disclosure of state secrets, a media report said on Sunday. The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on Saturday filed a charge sheet in the Special Court established under the Official Secrets Act, declaring Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chairman Khan and Vice Chairman Qureshi "principal accused" in the case, Dawn newspaper reported.

Both Khan and Qureshi are currently detained in jail on judicial remand. Khan, 70, was arrested in August after the case was filed against him for allegedly violating the Official Secrets Act by disclosing a secret diplomatic cable (cipher) sent by the country's embassy in Washington last year in

March. Qureshi, 67-year-old former foreign minister, was arrested under the Official Secrets Act for violating the secrecy of the official cable sent by the Pakistani embassy in the US to the foreign office when he was the foreign minister.

Khan and Qureshi have been placed in column 3 which describes the names and addresses of the accused sent for trial, the paper said.

The FIA invoked in the charge sheet sections 5 and 9 of the Official Secrets Act which may lead to a death sentence, or two to 14 years' imprisonment if proven. While the investigation agency cited 27 witnesses in the charge sheet, the paper said that about a dozen of them would be produced in the witness box.

The FIA has also attached the transcript of Khan and Qureshi's speeches made on March 27. The cricketer-turned-politician is charged with the violation of the

Official Secrets Act in connection with the leakage of a confidential diplomatic cable from Pakistan's embassy in Washington.

In March last year, ahead of the vote of no-confidence that resulted in his ouster, Khan pulled out a piece of paper — allegedly the cipher — from his pocket and waved it at a public rally in Islamabad, claiming it was the evidence of an "international conspiracy" being hatched to topple his government. However, during the interrogation with the joint investigation team (JIT) in the jail on August 26, Khan denied that the paper he waved at a public gathering last year was the cipher. He also admitted to losing the cipher, saying he couldn't recall where he kept it.

His principal secretary Azam Khan stated before a magistrate and the FIA that the Khan used it for his "political gains" and to avert a vote of no-confidence against him.



A portrait of Chinese President Xi Jinping is placed in front of Hong Kong activists living in Taiwan during a protest on China's National Day in Taipei, Taiwan, on Sunday

UK museum to sign pact for Shivaji's 'Tiger Claws' journey to India

PTI ■ LONDON

The Victoria and Albert (V and A) Museum is all set to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Maharashtra government next week, which will see 17th-century "Tiger Claws" weapon believed to have belonged to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj make a journey back to India for an exhibition.

During a protracted military engagement in 1659, the legendary Maratha leader held metal claws, or wagh nakh, concealed in his hand and is said to have disembowelled his opponent Afzal Khan — the commander of the opposing Bijapur army.

It is believed, though unverified, that the set of claws then came into the possession of James Grant Duff, an officer of the East India Company who was appointed Resident or political agent of the Satara state in 1818 and gifted to the

V and A by a descendant.

"The V and A looks forward to welcoming senior leadership from the Maharashtra government, to sign a memorandum of understanding," a V and A spokesperson said.

"The story of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's triumph over Afzal Khan is legendary, so we are delighted that the 'Tiger Claws' will return to India as part of the 350th anniversary events where they can be enjoyed as part of the celebrations. We hope that their display might also enable new research into their history and look forward to working in partnership with colleagues in the months ahead as we develop plans for their display," the spokesperson said.

The MoU, expected to be signed on Tuesday, coincides with Maharashtra's 350th anniversary celebrations of the coronation of Chhatrapati Shivaji. It is then expected to be dispatched to India later this

year for an agreed period.

According to the V and A, the weapon is accompanied by a fitted case made after Grant Duff returned to Scotland. The inscription on the case reads: "The 'Wagnuck' of Sivajee With Which He Killed the Moghul General. This Relic was given to Mr. James Grant-Duff of Eden When he was Resident at Satara by the Prime Minister of the Peshwa of the Marathas".

According to historical accounts, Shivaji and Afzal Khan had arranged a truce after political upheavals in order to meet in a tented enclosure, virtually alone.

The V and A description of the history of the "Tiger Claws" explains: "Both came armed: Shivaji wore mail under his clothes and metal skull protection under his turban. He also held a metal 'Tiger Claws' weapon concealed in his hand. The two men fought, and Shivaji disembowelled his opponent.

Federal agency sues Chipotle after Kansas manager rips off an employee's hijab

Kansas City (AP): A federal agency has sued the restaurant chain Chipotle, accusing it of religious harassment and retaliation after a manager at a Kansas location forcibly removed an employee's hijab, a headscarf worn by some Muslim women.

In a lawsuit filed Wednesday, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission alleged that in 2021, an assistant manager at a Chipotle in Lenexa, Kansas, repeatedly harassed the employee by asking her to show him her hair, despite her refusal. After several weeks, the harassment culminated in him grabbing and partially removing her hijab, according to the complaint. The manager's "offensive and incessant requests" that she remove her hijab, and his attempt to physically take it off, were "unwelcome, intentional, severe, based

on religion, and created a hostile working environment based on religion," the complaint alleged.

Chipotle's chief corporate affairs officer, Laurie Schalow, said the company encourages employees to report concerns, including through an anonymous hotline.

"We have a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination of any kind and we have terminated the employee in question," she said in an emailed statement.

The harassment began in July 2021, when the manager began asking the employee, who was 19 at the time, to remove her hijab, saying he wanted to see her hair.

According to the complaint, he demanded to see her hair at least 10 times over the course of one month. She refused on every occasion, saying she wore it because of her religious beliefs.

Maldives opp candidate Muiz wins presidential runoff: Media

AP ■ MALE

Opposition candidate Mohamed Muiz won the Maldives presidential runoff on Saturday, securing more than 53 per cent of the vote, local media reported.

The election has turned into a virtual referendum on which regional power — India or China — will have the biggest influence in the Indian Ocean archipelago nation.

Mihaaru News reported that incumbent President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih had received 46 per cent of the vote and that Muiz had won by more than 18,000 votes. Official results were expected on Sunday.

"With today's result we have got the opportunity to build the country's future. The strength to ensure the freedom of Maldives," Muiz said in a statement after his victory. "It's time we put our differences aside and come together. We need to be a peaceful soci-

ety." Muiz also requested that Solih transfer former president Abdulla Yameen to house arrest from prison.

It was a surprise win for Muiz, who entered the fray as an underdog. He was named only as a fallback candidate closer to the nomination deadline after the Supreme Court prevented Yameen from running because he is serving a prison sentence for money laundering and corruption. Yameen's supporters say he's been jailed for political reasons. "Today's result is a reflection of the patriotism of our people. A call on all our neighbours and bilateral partners to fully respect our independence and sovereignty," said Mohamed Shareef, a top official of Muiz's party.

He said it was also a mandate for Muiz to resurrect the economy and for Yameen's release. Neither Muiz nor Solih got more than 50 per cent in the first round of voting earlier in

September.

Solih, who was elected president in 2018, was battling allegations by Muiz that he had allowed India an unchecked presence in the country. Muiz's party, the People's National Congress, is viewed as heavily pro-China. Solih has insisted that the Indian military's presence in the Maldives was only to build a dockyard under an agreement between the two governments and that his country's sovereignty won't be violated. Muiz promised that if he won the presidency, he would remove Indian troops from the Maldives and balance the country's trade relations, which he said were heavily in India's favour. Ahmed Shaheed, a former foreign minister of Maldives, termed the election verdict as a public revolt against the government's failure to meet economic and governance expectations rather than concerns over Indian influence.

GST mop-up rises 10 per cent to over ₹1.62 lakh cr in September

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Helped by improved compliance, GST collections increased by 10 per cent to over Rs 1.62 lakh crore in September, crossing the Rs 1.6 lakh crore mark for the fourth time during current financial year.

Gross GST revenue collected last month was Rs 1,62,712 crore. Of this, Central GST was Rs 29,818 crore, State GST was Rs 37,657 crore, Integrated GST was Rs 83,623 crore (including Rs 41,145 crore collected on import of goods) and cess was Rs 11,613 crore (including Rs 881 crore collected on import of

goods). The revenue in September 2023 was 10 per cent higher than the GST revenue of Rs 1.47 lakh crore in the same month last year, the finance ministry said in a statement on Sunday.

"During the month, the revenues from domestic transactions (including import of services) are 14 per cent higher than the revenues from these sources during the same month last year. It is for the fourth time that gross GST collection has crossed Rs 1.60 lakh crore mark in FY 2023-24," it said.

Gross GST collection in the first half (April-September) of



FY24 stood at Rs 9,92,508 crore, an increase of 11 per cent from the year-ago period.

Average monthly gross collection in April-September FY24 was Rs 1.65 lakh crore, 11 per cent higher than the year-ago period, it said.

As the normal period of limitation for FY17-18 ended on September 30, some of this increased collection could be linked to businesses having settled issues with payment of taxes for the said period, KPMG Indirect Tax Head Abhishek Jain said.

While Rs 1.6 lakh crore plus seems to be the new normal, this could see a further uptick with

the festive season round the corner, he said.

According to Deloitte India partner M S Mani, the September GST collections augur well for the coming months of the festive season and is in line with the other high frequency indicators which reflect an uptick in the economy.

EY Tax Partner Saurabh Agarwal said increased GST collection indicates that the economy continues to be on a stable growth trajectory and rising collections from domestic transactions is an indicator that 'Make in India' policies of the government have started showcasing its impact.



'Resolutions under insolvency law likely to touch 300 this fiscal'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The number of resolutions of stressed assets under the insolvency law is likely to touch 300 this financial year, after rising 80 per cent in the last fiscal, and efforts are on to speed up the process for faster resolutions, senior officials said on Sunday.

Corporate Affairs Secretary Manoj Govil said the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) ecosystem needs to be prepared to deal with 1,000 resolutions.

Under the IBC, which provides for a market-linked and time-bound resolution process of stressed assets, creditors have witnessed recoveries of nearly Rs 3 lakh crore so far and the recovery amount stood at more than Rs 51,000 crore in 2022-23 financial year.

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) Chairperson Ravi Mital said the number of resolutions rose 80 per cent to 180 in the last financial year and is likely to touch 300 this year (2023-24 fiscal) and added that till August 2023, the resolutions stood at around 135.

Further, he urged insolvency resolution professionals to speed up their efforts in resolving the cases.

Speaking at the event in the national capital to mark the seventh annual day of the IBBI, a key institution in implementing the IBC, Mital said the law is a factor in the reduction of non-performing assets.

He also stressed that the law is not a recovery mechanism but a resolution mechanism.

Govil said efforts are on to speed up the resolution process and that the government is willing to take up amendments to the IBC to make the resolution process faster.

Mentioning about the pace of resolutions under the IBC, Govil said this financial year, the expectation is that the number of resolutions will go up to 300 and also wondered whether that is 'sufficient' to unclog the pipeline.

Citing a study, he said that around 5,000 new cases are filed every year under the IBC and added that the IBC

ecosystem should have the capacity to deal with at least 1,000 resolutions.

Efforts are on to make the resolution process faster and more smooth. This can be done by filling up posts, improving processes and regulations, among others, he noted.

As many as 300 resolutions will be good but the ecosystem should be prepared to deal with 1,000 cases, Govil said.

NCLT President Chief Justice (Retd) Ramalingam Sudhakar stressed on pre-packaged insolvency resolution process in the context of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

"Post Covid, it has been shown very evidently that MSMEs are in great distress... The next phase of evolution in the IBC should be to fine tune... Pre-packaged insolvency," he said.

Further, Sudhakar said an incremental approach is proposed for the development of a comprehensive and overarching platform for the insolvency ecosystem.

"The system should be AI-enabled with a proper decision support system and must have technology... For an integrated case management system... AI will be considered for suitable deployment as part of future contours in the insolvency ecosystem," he said.

Sudhakar also mentioned the need for developing an AI-enabled centralised e-platform for case management before the NCLT.

An AI-enabled platform of the NCLT that will handle all processes, including delivery of notices and fixing of hearings, with minimal human interface is another area of focus, he added.

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) Chairperson Justice Ashok Bhushan said the judiciary's role in interpreting the IBC has been transformative.

Through judgements, it has not only resolved disputes but has also shaped the IBC's evolution ensuring that it remains a robust and effective tool for insolvency and bankruptcy in India, he said and added that technology has been a force multiplier in implementation and evolution of the IBC.

Tata Motors total sales in domestic market rise 2 per cent to 80,633 units in September

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Tata Motors Ltd on Sunday reported a 2 per cent rise in its total domestic vehicle sales at 82,023 units in September, as against 80,633 units in the same month last year.

Passenger vehicle sales in the domestic market, including electric vehicles, were down 6 per cent at 44,809 units last month, as compared to 47,654 units in September 2022, Tata Motors said in a regulatory filing.

Electric vehicle sales, including in international markets, were at 6,050 units as compared to 3,864 units in the year-ago month, a growth of 57 per cent.

"Passenger vehicle sales remained strong in Q2 FY24 driven by new launches and pre-festive off-takes. Tata Motors posted quarterly sales of 1,38,939 cars and SUVs in Q2 FY24, about 2.7 per cent below our highest ever quarter, Q2 FY23," Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles Ltd and Tata Passenger Electric Mobility Ltd Managing Director Shailesh Chandra said.

He further said, "Our EV business continues its strong momentum and has posted growth of about 55 per cent year-on-year."

In Q2 FY24, the company



extended the innovative twin-cylinder CNG offering to Tiago, Tigor and Punch, which have been received well by the market, Chandra added.

The company said its total commercial vehicles sales were higher by 12 per cent at 39,064 units in September 2023, as compared to 34,890 units in September 2022.

Tata Motors Executive Director Girish Wagh said the company's commercial vehicles domestic sales stood at 99,178 in Q2FY24, 6 per cent higher than Q2FY23.

"Medium and heavy commercial vehicles segment saw a strong growth of 24 per cent over Q2 of FY23, fuelled by continued government infrastructure push, robust replacement demand, and growth in core sectors, along with sustained growth from the e-commerce sector," he added.

Electronics industry body seeks PLI scheme for non-semiconductor sectors

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Electronics industry body ELCINA has requested the government to come up with a production linked incentive scheme for non-semiconductor or computer chips sector which is dominated by imports, a senior official of the organisation said.

According to Electronic Industries Association of India (ELCINA) report, total electronic component market in the country was estimated to be around USD 39 billion, of which



68 per cent requirement was met through imports in 2021-22.

While speaking at 48th ELCINA Award Ceremony, organisation's new President Atul B Lall said that the government's scheme for devices has been hugely successful and the

incentive scheme for semiconductor sector is seeing a lot of traction and some investments have started flowing in.

"Our humble submission and perseverance is going to be to do the same for non-semiconductor component sector also. For which we request government's intervention," said Lall, who is Vice Chairman & Managing Director of Dixon Technologies.

ELCINA is the oldest electronics industry body of the country established in 1967.

According to the industry

body, mobile phones, consumer electronics and industrial electronics account for the major demand (85 per cent) for electronic components in India. This is followed by computer hardware.

ELCINA said that strategic electronics and lighting industry contribute to the balance of the market and industries like mobile phones, industrial electronics (due to the advent of electric vehicles) and strategic electronics are expected to witness substantial growth in the near future.

'India has scope for 130-150 more wide-body aircraft'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's fast-growing civil aviation market has the scope to have 130-150 more wide-body planes as airlines expand their operations and there is also the potential for more such aircraft to be deployed in dense domestic routes, GE Aerospace South Asia CEO Vikram Rai said.

GE Aerospace, a leading aircraft engine maker, sees a "great potential" in India, which is also the world's third largest aviation market and domestic airlines have nearly 1,500 aircraft on order.

While emphasising that "India is a focus market and a

priority market for GE Aerospace", Rai said that in his view, domestic airlines would consider having more wide-body planes in their fleet and also deploy them in dense domestic routes. "I see wide-body aircraft as a growth path for us and the airlines which is a win-win (scenario)," he told PTI in a recent interview.

Currently, India has around 700 commercial planes in operation and out of them, there are only about 50 wide-body aircraft. Air India has around 49 wide-body aircraft in its fleet while IndiGo has two wet-leased wide-body planes in operation.



In the current wide-body fleet, there would be replacements required. So, there is "scope to add 130-150 wide-body planes in India," Rai said and added that rising interna-

tional passengers from the country also augur well for the wide-body segment.

With rising air passenger traffic, the government is also working on ways to develop international aviation hubs in India so that domestic carriers can ferry passengers directly to various overseas destinations.

Currently, a majority of the people flying from India to international destinations travel by connecting flights operated by foreign carriers.

"We have to get to a point where we can get end-to-end carrying our passengers. That is the next step of growth we are talking about," Rai said.

Average office rent in top 7 cities at \$0.4-2/sq ft: Vestian

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Average monthly rentals for prime office space in India's top seven cities are very low at USD 0.4-2 per square feet, which is one of the major factors driving demand for workspace from global firms, according to Vestian.

Real estate consultant Vestian on Sunday released rentals data for major cities globally, which showed that

average rent in New York, London, Miami, Seattle and Boston is USD 40-80 per sq ft per month.

Rentals in Hong Kong, Singapore and Shanghai are USD 3-8 per sq ft a month.

Vestian said the demand for office spaces in the medium to long term would remain strong in India's seven big cities because of cost-effectiveness.

Shrinivas Rao, CEO, Vestian, said: "Indian office mar-

ket has grown leaps and bounds in the past decade due to robust demand from large multinational companies. These companies set up their operations in India to reap the cost benefits."

The demand for office spaces in India is expected to be buoyant amid current macro-economic uncertainty across the globe as companies are majorly focusing on optimizing operational costs for their businesses, Rao added.

As per the data, the average per square feet monthly rentals in New York is USD 60-80, London USD 60-70, Miami USD 55-65, Seattle USD 45-55, Boston USD 40-50, Hong Kong USD 6-8, Singapore USD 6-8, Shanghai USD 3-4.

Among Indian cities, Mumbai commands an average monthly rentals at USD 1-2 per square feet, Delhi USD 0.5-1.5, Bengaluru USD 0.8-1.2, Pune USD 0.7-1.1, Chennai USD 0.6-

0.9, Hyderabad USD 0.6-0.9 and Kolkata USD 0.4-0.7 per square feet.

In Mumbai's BKC and Delhi's central business district (Connaught Place and adjoining area) the average rent is USD 3-4 per square feet a month.

Vestian noted that several multinational corporations have set up their offices in India to effectively manage and execute real-time tasks across the globe from their Indian base.

"This preference is chiefly driven by substantial cost advantage associated with operating from India, as the cost of occupancy and overall operational expenses in India are notably lower in comparison to many other countries," the consultant said.

The availability of high-quality talent pool at an affordable rate is also an important factor for MNCs to set up offices in India, it added.

Luminous Power aims to double growth in 4 years; to invest ₹2,000 crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Energy storage solutions company Luminous Power Technologies aims to double its growth in the next four years, and is looking at solar energy vertical as a major growth enabler, where it is investing substantially, CEO Preeti Bajaj said.

Luminous Power, now completely owned by French engineering company Schneider Electric, has plans to invest around Rs 2,000 crore in capacity expansion of its existing plants, a solar greenfield project, research and development (R&D), digitisation, brand building and channel engagements.

"The company sees solar as a 'growing market' and reach an 'inflection' point in the next 2-3 years in terms of cost, as demand for clean energy sources is going to rise, where Luminous Power aims to be a leading company in this transformation journey here, she said. "Our vision is that solar will be a substantial part of our business," said Bajaj.

With the rise in per capita income and increase in power

consumption due to multiple appliances in urban households, the demand is shifting towards higher capacity inverters, batteries and residential solar adoption. It is in the process of opening a PV (photovoltaic) module factory at its Rudarpur plant in January, which will have 500 MW to 1 GW (expandable) solar production capacity.

"For the organisation, the growth engines to increase market capitalisation include a stronger focus on solar products. Solar is important towards sustainable and profitable growth," she said.

The company is making "forward-looking investments" to build capacity for solar products and create an ecosystem, which Bajaj sees "as a manufacturing imperative and an opportunity."

"We believe in this market and it is growing at 25 per cent. We want to play a part in that and to that effect, we are bringing new products to market," said Bajaj.

Besides, Luminous Power in collaboration with its channel partners is providing solar solutions to its customers as well.

Maruti Suzuki posts highest ever monthly sales in September

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) on Sunday said its total wholesales increased 3 per cent year-on-year to 1,81,343 units in September, its best ever in a month.

The country's largest carmaker had dispatched 1,76,306 units to dealers in the same month last year.

Total domestic passenger vehicle sales rose to 1,50,812 units last month, up 2 per cent from 1,48,380 units in September 2022, MSI said in a statement.

In the April-September period, the company's total sales crossed the 10-lakh sales mark.

MSI dispatched 10,50,085 units in the first half of the cur-

rent fiscal as compared with 9,85,326 units in the same period of last fiscal.

It is for the first time that the company surpassed the half-yearly sales mark of 1 million units, the automaker noted.

In September, the company said the sales of its entry level cars -- Alto and S-Presso -- stood at 10,351 units, down 65 per cent from 29,574 units in the year-ago period.

Sales of compact cars also declined to 68,552 units last month from 72,176 units in September 2022.

Utility vehicle dispatches, however, witnessed a jump of 82 per cent to 59,271 units last month from 32,574 units in September last year.

Hyundai reports highest ever monthly sales in September at 71,641 units

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Hyundai Motor India on Sunday said its total wholesales increased 13 per cent year-on-year to 71,641 units in September, its highest ever in a month.

The country's second largest carmaker had dispatched 63,201 units to dealers in September last

year. Domestic sales last month rose to 54,241 units, up 9 per cent from 49,700 units in September 2022, Hyundai Motor India said in a statement.

Exports were higher at 17,400 units last month from 13,501 units in September 2022, an increase of 29 per cent.

"While the industry grew by 2 per cent last month, our



domestic dispatches were up 9 per cent. The share of SUV sales in our overall volumes continues to grow," Hyundai Motor India COO Tarun Garg told PTI.

The ongoing festive season has resulted in strong sales momentum, helping the automaker achieve 9 per cent growth, he added.

BYJU'S targets to reach break-even by March, hive off Epic

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Etech major BYJU'S has set the target to become profitable by March 2024 on account of consolidation and restructuring of the organisation and settlement on USD 1.2 billion loan, sources aware of the development said.

The company has undertaken exercise to reduce workforce by about 3,000-3,500 this month by ending duplication in roles across the organisation.

"Think and Learn Private Ltd (TLPL) restructuring will see the current operations spread across several business units streamlined into four core areas of K-12, test prep, online and

hybrid. The business restructuring, aimed at matching resources with cash flows, will see the company achieve break-even by coming March, in fourth quarter of current fiscal," a source said.

BYJU'S declined to comment on a query sent in this regard.

TLPL operates under BYJU'S brand name.

BYJU'S had earlier set the target to become profitable by March 2023. BYJU'S booked a loss of Rs 4,588 crore for fiscal year ended March 31, 2021, 19 times more than the preceding fiscal.

The losses in the 2020-21 fiscal widened from Rs 231.69

profit or loss numbers for that year.

The company has convened a meeting of shareholders in the second week of October to finalise its delayed financial results for 2021-22.

"BYJU'S is in talks with investors to hive off EPIC to help settle USD 1.2 billion Term Loan B. The company wants to dispose it off within 150 days. The proposal has gone to lenders and their response is awaited," the source said.

Another source said that if required, BYJU'S may hive off Great Learning too, but it expects that the money raised through EPIC sale will meet its requirement.

the company's domestic sales. He said that despite enhanced competition in the market, Creta continues to lead in the mid-sized SUV segment.

Garg noted that despite various challenges like high interest rates and inflation in the market, the automaker remains positive about its sales performance this year.



Alcaraz, Sabalenka sail through at China Open

AFP ■ BEIJING

Top seeds Carlos Alcaraz and Aryna Sabalenka both breezed into the next round of the China Open with routine victories on Sunday. Alcaraz sealed a place in the men's quarter-finals with a smooth 6-2, 6-2 victory over Italy's Lorenzo Musetti in Beijing. The world number two overpowered his opponent and seized the first set when Musetti whacked a baseline backhand into the net. The Spaniard then broke serve twice in the second set and saw out a comfortable match with an unreturned serve. He will next face Casper Ruud after the world number nine came back to beat Argentina's Tomas Etcheverry 1-6, 7-5, 7-6 (9-7). "I feel great, honestly. It was a good performance against a really tough opponent," Alcaraz said at a post-match press briefing. "(My level) didn't (go) up and down. I stayed at a high level, high quality, during the whole match," the 20-year-old said. A sticking point in the tournament's early rounds has been the match balls, which Alcaraz's main challenger Daniil

Medvedev described on Saturday as "like a grapefruit". Alcaraz said Sunday he had also felt the distinct quality of the balls -- allegedly quick to fluff up -- "since day one". "It's something tough, but tennis players have to get used to the balls in every tournament," he said in response to a question from AFP. "Here, in just one or two games, the balls become really different from (when they're) new. It's a kind of different (style of) play," he said. Also on Sunday, world number seven Jannik Sinner obliterated Japan's Yoshihito Nishioka 6-2, 6-0. The Italian will play a quarter-final against either fourth-ranked Holger Rune or Bulgaria's Grigor Dimitrov, who play each other on Sunday evening. **SUPER SABALENKA** Earlier, world number one Aryna Sabalenka sailed into the second round of the women's draw with an imperious 6-1, 6-2 defeat of American Sofia Kenin. The Belarusian pummelled Kenin with a succession of mighty serves and groundstrokes and wrapped up the opening set with an ace after just 23 minutes.



The 25-year-old broke serve twice more in the second set as Kenin -- playing with heavy strapping on her left thigh -- failed to muster a response. Sabalenka sealed the match with yet another unreturned serve to set up a tie against either Magdalena Frech or Katie Boulter in the next round. "Honestly, I didn't expect to play that good on my serve -- in practice, it didn't work very well," Sabalenka said at a post-match briefing. "But I was super hyped that I was able to bring that level on my serve today. I think it helped a lot," she said. "I think that was the key of today's match." The China Open is taking place for the first time since 2019 after Beijing ended its isolationist zero-Covid policies. All of the eight top-ranked men are taking part except tennis legend Novak Djokovic, while all of the women's top eight are in action. The women's tournament is also the first since its global governing body ended a boycott of China this year. The embargo had been declared after Chinese player Peng Shuai made sexual assault accusations against a top government official.



Jerome Boateng trains with Bayern Munich

AFP ■ MUNICH (GERMANY)

Germany defender Jerome Boateng trained with Bayern Munich on Sunday, amid reports the centre-back may be set to make a return to the Bundesliga champions. The club wrote on its website that Boateng was "among those involved" in Sunday's session, adding the defender "will continue to train over the coming days". Free since the expiry of his contract with Lyon in June, Boateng, 35, could serve as a backup solution for Bayern coach Thomas Tuchel. Bayern currently have only three recognised central defenders -- Dayot Upamecano, Kim Min-Jae and Matthijs de Ligt -- with the latter having missed his side's 2-

2 draw with RB Leipzig on Saturday due to injury. Tuchel was also forced to play midfielder Leon Goretzka and wing-back Noussair Mazraoui in central defence in Bayern's Cup tie against Muenster on Tuesday, which the German champions won 4-0. Boateng played for Bayern from 2011 to 2021, winning the 2013 and 2020 Champions League titles, as well as the 2014 World Cup with Germany. Boateng is also currently undergoing a continuing court procedure in Bavaria for domestic violence. A German court last month threw out the assault conviction against Boateng for attacking his ex-girlfriend in 2018 and ordered a new trial.

PSG players apologise for anti-Marseille chants

AFP ■ PARIS

Four Paris Saint-Germain players on Sunday apologised for offensive chants aimed at rivals Marseille after a Ligue 1 game, saying they "sincerely regretted" their words. French internationals Ousmane Dembele, Randal Kolo Muani, and Layvin Kurzawa and Moroccan Achraf Hakimi were filmed singing an



insulting song towards Marseille fans after a 4-0 victory at the Parc des Princes on September 24. "We let ourselves get carried away by the euphoria and we sincerely regret the words we should not have said and would like to apologise," the four said in identical posts on social media. "We are well aware of the impact of our actions and our words on the public, notably the youngest who

dream watching a football match," they continued, adding "in the future, we will do everything to further respect our duty to set an example". Homophobic chants were also sung during this match by Parisian supporters for several minutes. The club and its four players will appear before the French football league's disciplinary committee next Thursday, the day after PSG's Champions League trip to Newcastle.

Kudermetova beats Pegula to win Pan Pacific Open



AFP ■ TOKYO

Russia's Veronika Kudermetova won the Pan Pacific Open in Tokyo on Sunday, upsetting tennis world number four Jessica Pegula in straight sets. The 19th-ranked Kudermetova overwhelmed the American 7-5, 6-1 in an hour and 24 minutes. "I knew it would be a tough final... I need to fight for every ball and today it worked really well," she said. "I'm really happy that I managed to win my second title," said the 26-year-old, who won her first WTA singles title

in Charleston in 2021. She beat Pegula in three sets on the clay in Madrid this year. "I played better today than in Madrid," Kudermetova said, adding that Pegula "always fights and plays solidly every match". "Today I followed my game and my plan" to play aggressively, she said. Kudermetova had a tough semi-final, needing three hours and 25 minutes to defeat Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova. She stunned four-time Grand Slam champion Iga Swiatek in the quarters. Pegula was aiming for her

second title of the season following victory last month in Montreal. Kudermetova "put a lot of pressure on me at the beginning so it made it very tough", the American said. "Luckily I was able to get back to the first set but I just don't think I was serving well enough... She was a better player today." The 29-year-old went into the US Open dreaming of a first ever Grand Slam title, but her campaign came to an abrupt halt as compatriot and close friend Madison Keys recorded a dominant win in just 61 minutes.



VAR officials stood down after Liverpool goal error

AFP ■ LONDON

The match officials at fault for a botched VAR call that cost Liverpool a goal in their 2-1 defeat at Tottenham on Saturday have been removed from duty for the rest of the Premier League weekend. Referees' body the PGMOL admitted a "significant human error" had meant Luis Diaz's strike, when the game was level at 0-0, was not awarded by a VAR review after being flagged offside. VAR official Darren England was due to be fourth official at Sunday's Premier League match between

Nottingham Forest and Brentford. And his assistant VAR Dan Cook was to be assistant referee for Monday's west London derby between Fulham and Chelsea. Spurs struck in the 96th minute through Joel Matip's own goal to edge a highly controversial encounter. Liverpool were reduced to

nine men as Curtis Jones and Diogo Jota were sent-off either side of half-time. "I never saw a game like this with the most unfair circumstances, crazy decisions," said Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp. PGMOL chief Howard Webb apologised to the Reds after the match for the error that ruled out Diaz's strike.

Martin 3 points off Bagnaia with wet Japan MotoGP win

AFP ■ MOTEGI (JAPAN)

Jorge Martin narrowed the gap on championship leader Francesco Bagnaia to just three points with six races left on Sunday after winning a Japan MotoGP cut short by rain. Starting from pole, the Spaniard had already cut the difference to Italy's Bagnaia to only eight points on Saturday with his third straight sprint victory and fifth of the season. Ducati's Bagnaia came second in the race, giving the defending world champion 319 points compared to 316 for Martin from Ducati satellite team Pramac. Marc Marquez took third. The 24-lap race began under overcast skies and light rain quickly intensified once the race started in mountainous Motegi. This made for treacherous conditions with slippery turns and a sea of spray, and most riders came into the pits early on to change tyres. Martin and Bagnaia worked their way back to the top of the field before organisers suspended the race with 12 laps to go. They attempted a restart but the red flags quickly came out again and the riders were awarded full points according to their positions at the stoppage. "I was committed to do a great result today," Martin said afterwards. "I felt really good with the rear grip and I was able to overtake all of them (after the pit stop) and make this gap to win today," he added. "I'm so happy. Luckily everybody's away but it was too dangerous to keep going,"

he added. Bagnaia said he was happy with the result but said he thought he could have overtaken Martin. "I was hoping to do more



laps to catch Jorge because I was trying to gain (on him) lap by lap without pushing too much," he said. "Unluckily, we didn't have

time to finish the race... I think, with the time management, I was quite competitive in the last part of the race," he said. Looking ahead, Bagnaia said competition was turning more "difficult" and "intense" as he duelled with Martin for the championship. "I think it will be interesting. Could be a great fight. For sure, it's more intense right now. It's more difficult," he said. Six-time world champion Marquez on Honda made his first podium finish of the year at the home circuit of the Japanese brand. He started from the third row, but as rain caused other riders to go wide or even into gravel, the Spaniard saw an opening to race to the podium. "I enjoyed (it). In the

beginning of the race I was very calm, just tried to understand the tyres," Marquez said. "When I saw that there was water on the track, I started to attack and I was increasing the speed step by step," he said. South African Brad Binder on KTM crashed out early in the race. He set a lap record on Friday, before Martin renewed it on Saturday. Johann Zarco also crashed and was not allowed to return to the race after he took a shortcut to get back into the pit lane. Last weekend, Martin had already narrowed the difference to 13 points in India in Greater Noida. I seconds later by Bagnaia, and 0.353 seconds by 2022 Japanese GP winner Jack Miller on KTM.

नाम परिवर्तन	सूचना
<p>में अरुणा चौहान (Aruna Chohan) सर्वसाधारण को सूचित करती हूँ मेरे सभी शासकीय/अर्धशासकीय दस्तावेजों में मेरा नाम अरुणा चौहान (Aruna Chohan) है जो की सही है परंतु मेरे पति के सर्विस बुक्स में मेरे घर का नाम यशोदा बाई अंकित हो गया है जो शादी की पत्रिका में उल्लिखित था। जो कि गलत है। अरुणा चौहान और यशोदा बाई दोनो मेरे ही नाम हैं इस विज्ञापित के बाद मुझे अरुणा चौहान (Aruna Chohan) के नाम से ही जाना पहचाना और पुकारा जाए।</p> <p>पुराना नाम: यशोदा बाई नया नाम: अरुणा चौहान (Aruna Chohan) पत्नी श्री जगदीश कुमार</p>	<p>कार्यालय नगर पालिका परियद हटा की 01 अक्टूबर को प्रकाशित निविदा सूचना में लागत त्रुटिवश 19.16 लाख प्रकाशित हो गयी जिसे 119.16 लाख पढ़ा जाए मुख्य नगर पालिका अधिकारी, हटा</p> <p>Change of Name</p> <p>In my passport, my mother's name is incorrectly recorded as "Majeet Kaur Aujla." According to government/private documents, the correct name is "Manjeet Kaur." All documents should reflect and be read with this corrected name. Informer Harpreet Singh Aujla, H. No 28 Sarla paradise bhel Bhopal.</p>

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY	
No.-JHANSI/W/TENDER GENERAL	Date: 29.09.2023
E-Tendering Tender Notice	
Divisional Railway Manager (Works) N.C. Railway, Jhansi for and behalf of President of India invites sealed "Open Tender" through on Line (E-Tendering) for the following work.	
Description of Work: Supplying, stacking and mechanized loading into Railway hoppers/boxes machine crushed 100000 m³ track ballast as per latest Railway specification IRS-GE-I-June 2016 at KID depot under ADEN/BNDA's sub division.	
E-Tender No.: JHS-ENGG- E-2023-139	
Approx Cost ₹ : 92984300.00	Earnest Money : ₹614900.00
Date of closing Tender: 23.10.2023 at 15:00 Hrs	
Date of Completion/period from issue acceptance letter: 24 Months	
Tender online can be submitted up to 15:00 hrs on 23.10.2023. For full details and submission of bid please see the Indian Railways website www.ireps.gov.in 1596/23(DG)	

मध्यप्रदेश को ₹19,000 करोड़ की विकास परियोजनाओं की सौगात

2.21 लाख पीएम आवासों का "गृह प्रवेशम्"

एवं

पीएम आवास (शहरी) में

1355 आवासों व अन्य इकाइयों का "लोकार्पण"

एवं

5 राष्ट्रीय राजमार्ग

मल्टी मॉडल लॉजिस्टिक पार्क, इंदौर

ग्वालियर, श्योपुर की 3 जल जीवन मिशन परियोजनाएं

आईआईटी इंदौर छात्रावास एवं अन्य भवन

9 शहरों में क्रिटिकल केयर ब्लॉक का

शिलान्यास

तथा

दिल्ली-वडोदरा-मुंबई एक्सप्रेस-वे

इंडियन ऑयल कॉर्पोरेशन की ग्वालियर, रतलाम परियोजनाएं

विक्रम उद्योगपुरी उज्जैन तथा आईआईटी इंदौर अकादमिक भवन

अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी दिव्यांग स्पोर्ट्स सेन्टर, ग्वालियर

38 कि.मी. ग्वालियर-सुमावली रेलवे लाइन परिवर्तित आमान का

लोकार्पण

प्रधानमंत्री

नरेन्द्र मोदी

के कर-कमलों द्वारा

2 अक्टूबर, 2023 | दोपहर 3:30 बजे | ग्वालियर, मध्यप्रदेश



नरेन्द्र मोदी, प्रधानमंत्री



शिवराज सिंह चौहान, मुख्यमंत्री

मल्टी मॉडल लॉजिस्टिक पार्क, इंदौर
विभिन्न परिवहन सेवाओं की एकीकृत सुविधा के निर्माण से औद्योगिक विकास को प्रोत्साहन एवं 15 लाख प्रत्यक्ष और अप्रत्यक्ष रोजगारों का सृजन

राष्ट्रीय राजमार्ग

144 कि.मी. लंबी सड़कों के निर्माण से सुगम यातायात एवं सुरक्षित आवागमन संभव, किसानों को उपज के विक्रय में सुविधा

जल जीवन मिशन परियोजनाएं

ग्वालियर और श्योपुर जिलों के 723 गांवों को स्वच्छ जल, वर्ष 2025 तक 1 करोड़ 19 लाख ग्रामीण घरों में नल से जल का लक्ष्य

क्रिटिकल केयर हेल्थ ब्लॉक

9 शहरों के शासकीय अस्पतालों में कुल 450 बिस्तरों की बढ़ोतरी से चिकित्सा सुविधाओं में वृद्धि

दिल्ली-वडोदरा-मुंबई एक्सप्रेस-वे
औद्योगिक गतिविधियों को बढ़ावा, रोजगार के अवसरों का सृजन एवं बेहतर कनेक्टिविटी से किसानों को लाभ

विक्रम उद्योगपुरी, उज्जैन

1132 एकड़ में बहु-उत्पाद औद्योगिक इकाइयों की स्थापना के लिए सुविधाओं के विकास से निवेश को बढ़ावा

अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी दिव्यांग स्पोर्ट्स सेंटर, ग्वालियर

विकास के सक्षम वातावरण के साथ दिव्यांग बच्चों को खेलों में प्रोत्साहन और प्रशिक्षण के अवसर

ग्वालियर-सुमावली रेलवे आमान परिवर्तन

38 कि.मी. आमान परिवर्तन एवं नई यात्री ट्रेनों के संचालन से ग्रामीण क्षेत्र सीधे रेल सेवा से जुड़ेंगे, स्वास्थ्य एवं शिक्षा सुविधाओं तक पहुंच होगी आसान