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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 amid 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. "Gandhi's message is very complicated, but its essence is very, very simple," Jaishankar said.

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 35-A, 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 & 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.

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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

Defiant Didi marches to Delhi

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress which has dispatched to Delhi about 3,000 of its foot soldiers — allegedly in the garb of unpaid MNREGA workers — to participate in an anti-Centre rally seemed to concede roundly that corruption had indeed taken place in the implementation of the 100-days' work scheme.

While reminding Prime Minister Narendra Modi that his Government in the Centre "cannot browbeat the brave Trinamool Congress cadre into submission", TMC general secretary Abhishek Banerjee on Sunday said complaints of corruption should not be made the ground for withholding Central funds meant for the uplift of the poor.

"There may be a few corrupt people who should be punished... but why do the whole lot of people be punished for that... Why is Prime Minister Narendra Modi punishing 2.5 crore people of Bengal for the offence committed by 20 people," Banerjee asked,

reminding how the Centre had released the funds to the Assam Government despite reports of corruption there.

"Have they not released funds to Assam Government where two corruption has taken place... if they can release funds for one State then why this discrimination against Bengal," Banerjee who is also the nephew of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said, reminding how the "poor workers of our State have been made to starve for about two years now" just because they voted against the BJP in 2021 Assembly elections.

"They can release ₹20,000 crore for the Prime Minister's house but they cannot release funds for the poor unpaid workers when the Central Act makes the payment mandatory within 15 days of the work getting done," Banerjee said reminding how the "Centre takes away the GST from the people of Bengal and refuses to return the money back to them."

While the TMC claims that the Centre has withheld about ₹15,000 crore of MNREGA funds which is



a small part of the total Central deprivation amounting to more than ₹1 lakh crore the Opposition BJP has hit back saying the "Mamata Banerjee Government is transferring the blame on the BJP whereas even after repeated reminders they have failed to account for the previous funds released to them."

BJP State president Sukanta Majumdar said his party would "soon expose the TMC through a statistic showing the amount of

money that has been misappropriated by their workers... About 15 lakh fake job cards have been cancelled... you can figure out the amount that has been lifted through those 15 lakh fake job cards.... This is public money after all and cannot be released at will... and now they are trying to transfer the blame at our doors."

The TMC general secretary who had earlier promised to ferry two lakh people to Delhi on

Saturday and Sunday flagged off about 50 buses-loads of party men to take part in dharna in Delhi.

The buses were arranged in a hurry after the train to Delhi, the party had booked, was cancelled by the Eastern Railways on account of unavailability of rakes amid allegations of BJP's manipulations in providing trains to ferry their workers to the national Capital.

While the party grassroots, along with the unpaid job card holders, were left by buses the lesser leaders including panchayat, pradhans, district board members et al flew to Delhi. The top leadership including Banerjee, his fellow MPs and the Ministers in the Mamata Cabinet and MLAs too went by air.

Banerjee, who is also the MP from Diamond Harbour, was likely to meet his party leaders on Sunday at the Lodhi Estate bungalow of former Union Minister and MP Saugato Roy, sources said. "Final strategies will be taken there in consultation with Mamata," a senior leader said.

In a related development, much

in the lines of the King of Righteousness Hammurabi's recommendations: "eye-for-an-eye" and "tooth-for-a-tooth", the top Trinamool Congress leadership has offered to use "baton-for-a-baton," back in Bengal should their workers are baton-charged by the "BJP-run" Delhi Police during their show of protest in the national Capital on Monday and Wednesday.

A day after TMC general secretary Abhishek Banerjee warned that "if even a single deprived worker going with us is touched in Delhi then there will be consequences in Bengal," an apparently charged up State Irrigation Minister Partha Bhowmick too let out a war cry warning, "If the batons are used there, the batons will be used here too." He would not however use the word BJP.

Banerjee had on Saturday reminded that "like in Delhi, the Bengal Government too has its own police and they too know how to act with purpose."

The TMC leaders' words of caution came after Bengal BJP pres-

ident Sukanta Majumdar said the "thieves" going to Delhi "should be arrested," while another saffron leader said that the Delhi Police was not as lacklustre as their Bengal counterparts. "They know how to keep the unruly crowds under control," he said.

The CPI(M) which has recently tasted a good jump in its vote bank — 21 per cent as against the BJP's 22 per cent — in the rural polls immediately said the two sides — the TMC and the BJP — were rattling sabers in public in order to create a binary.

"But the people of Bengal fell in that trap in 2019 and 2021... but they will not do so for the third time... they will do what they should do this time," CPI(M) Central committee member Sujan Chakrabarty said. The TMC and the BJP are playing a pre-scripted game, he said. "The poor people from Bengal have been taken there... they will be beaten up and jailed and then the TMC will encash sentiments in the elections by making it a BJP-versus-TMC affair," he said.

Cleanliness drives galore on eve of Gandhi Jayanti

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With a view to strengthening Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of a cleaner and greener India, the 'Swachhata Hi Seva' shramdaan was organised in various parts of the city on Sunday.

The Lucknow Municipal Organisation organised 'shramdaan' at Balu Adda, which witnessed the participation of the minister and Lucknow district incharge, Suresh Khanna, Mayor Sushma Kharakwal, and Municipal Commissioner Inderjit Singh besides corporators, and officials of RWA, Tempo Taxi Sangh and NGOs.

The minister appealed to residents of the city to do their bit to make the cleanliness campaign a success. An appeal was made to people to maintain cleanliness in their homes as well as in the neighborhood and make each other aware about the importance of cleanliness.

Saplings were also planted by the municipal commissioner, AMC Lalit Kumar, and chief tax assessment officer Ambi Bisht among others.

The 'Swachhjanjali' programme was organised at Balu Adda, where hearing and visually impaired children demonstrated their art by painting things related to cleanliness.

Meanwhile, under the guidance of Governor Anandiben Patel, a massive cleanliness campaign was conducted at Raj Bhavan Sunday, on the eve of Gandhi Jayanti.

All the officers and employees of Raj Bhavan, along with the governor, participated in the campaign.

To make the cleanliness programme a success, 20 teams were formed under the leadership of Raj Bhavan officials. A large number of officers and employees in all the teams cleaned the sites identified earlier. While the team leaders themselves remained engaged in the cleaning campaign, they were also seen encouraging their teams.

During the campaign, the places prone to dengue and other infectious diseases were cleaned. The governor also inspected the cleaning works.

'Shramdaan' was carried out at the collectorate, which witnessed the participation of District Magistrate Surya Pal Gangwar. He said that the 'Swachhata Hi Seva' campaign is a medium of awareness for the community.

He said that public representatives who were also part of the campaign inspired people to maintain cleanliness. "We should take interest in the cleanliness of our houses, its surroundings and the public places, and make it a daily routine of our lives so that the city remains hygienic, because unhygienic conditions impact our health," he added.

Chief Secretary Durga Shankar Mishra carried out 'shramdaan' at Kudia Ghat. A cleanliness drive was also held at Sanjay Gandhi Post-Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences on Sunday, on the eve of the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

The 'Swachhata Pakhwada' at SGPIMS was aimed at fostering a cleaner surroundings in and around the premises.

The drive, which started from the Emergency Medicine and Renal Transplant Centre, was led by officiating director Prof Shaleen Kumar, CMS Prof Sanjay Dhiraaj, nodal officer (sanitation) Prof Subhash Yadav, HoD (microbiology) Prof Rugmi S Marak, etc.

Meanwhile, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) organised 'swachhata shramdaan' in association with National Association For Blind on Sunday. The exercise was joined by the visually impaired children.

Similar programmes were organised in all the departments of both the campuses of Lucknow University. Dean, Faculty of Arts, Prof Arvind Awasthi, and DSW Prof Sangeeta Sahu among others contributed to the cleanliness campaign.

A cleanliness campaign was organised by Dr Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University where the Government Primary School of Khwajapur and Rajvansh Residency located near the university, were cleaned. The programme was presided over by BBAU Vice-Chancellor Sanjay Singh.

Meanwhile, UPMRC staff was deployed at all the 21 metro stations for donating their one hour for a cleanliness drive. Managing director Sushil Kumar said, "UPMRC has been sincerely abiding by the 'Swachhata Hi Seva' principle since its inception. Right from the construction phase to operations, special emphasis has been laid on cleanliness at project sites and stations."

The Tourism department also contributed towards the cause. Special emphasis was laid on the cleaning of tourist spots, such as historical sites, heritage monuments, and religious places. The Tourism Directorate building and nearby areas were also cleaned. Tourism and Culture Minister Jaiveer Singh expressed enthusiasm for the initiative, stating, "This is a significant step towards realising our vision of a cleaner and more beautiful Uttar Pradesh. The department is committed to promoting the rich cultural heritage and natural beauty of the state to create a sustainable environment for all citizens and tourists alike. Let us all join hands in this noble endeavour to create a cleaner and healthier environment for our citizens."

Similar programmes were held at several places in Lucknow by the Principal Directorate of Defense Estates, Central Command, Lucknow. The general public and employees of Defence Estates performed 'shramdaan' for cleanliness. The team then reached Dilkusha Kothi and Garden where the cleanliness campaign was launched under the leadership of GOC-in-C, Central Command, Lt Gen NS Raja Subramani by the officers and soldiers of the Indian Army as well as others.

Thereafter, the team under the leadership of army commander and principal director reached the Gomti riverfront in Pipraghat, where plastic, bottles, garbage and all types of waste were collected from the banks of the river and disposed by taking them to the trenching ground in the collection vehicles of the Cantonment Board.

Under the leadership of principal director Bhavna Singh, the programme began by remembering Mahatma Gandhi. DEO and CEO, Cantonment Council, Promila Jaiswal also participated in the programme.

Meanwhile, Rapid Action Force (RAF) 91 battalion participated in a special cleanliness drive under Commandant Amitabh Kumar in Chandrawal CHC in Sarojinagar on Sunday.



(Clockwise from top) Cleanliness drive at Balu Adda by LMC on Sunday; UPMRC staff sweeping area near a metro station; former Deputy DM Dinesh Sharma during a clean-up drive by North-Eastern Railway; and RAF 91 battalion after taking part in a special drive

Sciences on Sunday, on the eve of the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. The 'Swachhata Pakhwada' at SGPIMS was aimed at fostering a cleaner surroundings in and around the premises.

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Man shoots self while on video call with sisters

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A man shot himself with his unlicensed 12-bore gun allegedly due to anxiety following his deteriorating health in Aliganj on Sunday.

"He was said to be on a video call with his sisters when he shot himself at his house under Shivlok police outpost in Aliganj on Sunday," ADCP, North, Abhijith R Shankar said. "The deceased, identified as Mukesh Srivastava (35), son of Akhilesh Srivastava, had been unwell for a long time, and due to which he was in depression. He took this extreme step under a bout of depression," the ADCP said.

"The body has been sent for autopsy and further investigation is underway," police said. According to Aliganj SHO Ashutosh Kumar, the deceased was jobless since lockdown.

"He became a liquor addict due to joblessness and developed multiple health issues in due course of time. He was unmarried," the SHO said, adding that Akhilesh was on a video call with his sisters, who are married in different cities.

Meanwhile, a case for abatement to suicide was registered on Saturday, a week after a 17-year-old girl ended her life in PGI police station area. The only child of her parents, Deepali Katiyar of South City locality was found hanging at her house on September 24. Around 2:55 pm on the fateful day, her father got a call from one Ajay aka Babuji, who told him that Deepali used to talk to his son Anshul Katiyar.

Ajay further told the victim's father that Anshul's wife Anjali knew about the talks

Youth abducted, thrashed

Lucknow (PNS): A group of youths abducted their rival and took him to a deserted place where they thrashed him before fleeing the scene in Gosainganj on Friday night. The victim's family searched for him and later rushed him to the CHC from where she was referred to KGMU Trauma Centre.

The police registered a case under relevant sections of the IPC, including one for attempted murder, but did not impose the sections for abduction. They claimed that the victim's father did not mention abduction in his complaint.

As per reports, Aswani aka Asani (26) of Ganga Khera was reported missing around 7 pm on Friday. It later surfaced that he was being accompanied by his rival Saurabh and

his aides. His family went out to search for him, but failed to locate him.

The victim, who regained consciousness on Sunday, said that Saurabh and his men took him to a field where they beat him with sticks and also kicked him. I fell unconscious because of injuries to the head and other body parts even as they fled the scene, probably considering me dead. I did not remember what happened after that," he said.

His father Ram Kumar said he found his son while searching for him and took him to the CHC where doctors examined his condition as critical and referred him to KGMU. "My son was lying in a pool of blood in the field near Purvanchal Expressway," he said.

between her husband and Deepali and that she had threatened her with dire consequences.

"Anshul and Anjali had threatened Deepali with dire consequences on the fateful day and Deepali was going to end her life," Ajay had informed the victim's father over the phone.

Shocked at the revelation, the victim's father immediately called his wife and asked her to search for Deepali.

"My wife was at the shop and she went to her room whose doors were bolted from inside. She sought help from neighbours as Deepali was not answering the calls. We broke open the doors only to find Deepali hanging from the ceiling. We rushed her to a hospital where she was pronounced dead," the victim's father said.

He said he got a call from Anshul and his wife a little later and he requested him not to register a police complaint. "They confessed to their fault of forcing Deepali to commit suicide and promised a compensation. I turned down their offer and it irked them. They abused and threatened to kill me," the victim's father said. He added that Anshul and his wife forced his daughter to end her life. "They have had a criminal past. My wife and I are living in fear following their threats. I have documented evidence against Anshul and his wife," he claimed. Police registered a case under relevant sections of the IPC.

Sutli bombs hurled at corporator's house

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Unidentified men lobbed sutli bombs at the house of Faizullaganj (ward IV) corporator in Madiaon police station area on the intervening night of Saturday and Sunday.

The corporator, Ramu Das Kanauija of New Dawood Nagar, said he heard the explosion around 1:15 am on Sunday and waited for the miscreants to leave the scene.

"I came out of the house after the miscreants left the scene and found the tiles of roof uprooted and damaged. I also found the remains of a sutli bomb while a live sutli bomb was still lying on the road. The miscreants lobbed the bombs to kill me," he alleged. The victim, however, could not give any clue to police about the miscreants. Sources said that the corporator was attacked either due to a rivalry over election or some property dispute.

Meanwhile, three car-borne men, claiming to be close aides of a BJP MLA, allegedly misbehaved with a woman and had a scuffle with Dial 112 personnel, who had reached the scene on the distress call of the victim in Gautampalli police station area on Friday night. Police registered a case in this connection. The police arrested the three accused, identified as Siddharth Singh of PGI, Himanshu and Satyam of Ballia district.

In her FIR, the woman stated the accused were in an inebriated state and they hit her vehicle with their car. "When we confronted them, they blew their top. We police by dialing 112, but they were unfazed. They indulged in a

verbal spat with the cops and had a scuffle with them. They were speaking about a BJP MLA and said they were close aides of the MLA," the victim said.

She said they warned her that they could not be questioned by police due to their closeness with the BJP MLA. On the basis of her complaint, the police registered a case and arrested the accused.

Meanwhile, two motorcycle-borne unidentified men deprived a woman of her gold chain in Ashiyana near her house on Saturday evening. The incident took place at a time when a police team was conducting a vehicle checking drive in the locality.

Reports said that the woman, Ranjana Maurya of Rashmi Khand, was struck around 6 pm when she was near PWD road of Irrigation department. "The pillion-rider snatched my gold chain and the two sped off the scene. I cried for help and ran after them. Some of the commuters also chased them, but they disappeared in no time. They fled towards Casa Green road in the area," she said.

Meanwhile, a woman, locked in a war of words with her husband, ended her life at her house in Thakurganj. Her husband informed about the incident. Reports said Sushma (25) was not on good terms with her husband Vijay Pal, who is a private doctor and runs a hospital at Bhatpamau crossing in the area. They got married in February this year. On Sunday morning, she was found hanging with a dupatta tied around her neck. The police sent the body for autopsy and started further investigation.

Paddy procurement begins officially

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow (PNS): The Uttar Pradesh government has officially started paddy procurement at the minimum support price for the 2023-24 Kharif season from Sunday. The actual purchase of paddy will begin once the crop is harvested and arrives at agricultural markets.

The harvesting is likely to be delayed in some areas of the state due to late sowing of the crop due to erratic monsoon.

Official agencies appointed by the state government have made ample arrangements at paddy purchase centres to ensure farmers face no difficulties. Special instructions have been issued to department officials and nodal agencies for this purpose.

This season, the UP government is purchasing paddy at increased MSP. The new MSP rates for common and Grade A paddy are Rs 2,183 per quintal and Rs 2,203 per quintal respectively. Last year, these rates were Rs 2,040 per quintal for common paddy and Rs 2,060 per quintal for Grade A paddy. This season, the nodal agency for paddy procurement, Food and Civil Supplies department has set the target of procuring 70 lakh MT of paddy. Special care has been taken to ensure that farmers do not face any problem in bringing paddy to the centre. Additionally, the department is making transparent arrangements for immediate payment to farmers after crop purchase. For this, the centres have been geo-tagged with the help of Remote Sensing Application Centre (RSAC). The farmers intending to sell their agriculture produce to the government will have to register themselves on the Food and Civil Supplies department's portal www.fcs.up.gov.in.

While the plot's stamp valuation is just over Rs 76 lakh, official sources pegged its market value at about Rs 10 crore.

In April, the department had attached the first property in the case against Ansari, located at Mauja Kapurpur NZA under Sadar tehsil in Uttar Pradesh's Ghazipur district, and identified his alleged associate — Ganesh Dutt Mishra — as the benamidar of this about Rs 12 crore-worth land. The taxman unearthed the latest asset (in Lucknow's Dalibagh) after prolonged questioning of Mishra and

records obtained from the Uttar Pradesh Police and the revenue department and financial documents from various agencies, including banks.

It found Mishra mortgaged the Dalibagh property as collateral for a Rs 1.60 crore loan taken from the Union Bank of India in 2014 by a company named Aaghaaz Project and Engineering Private Limited, whose shareholders were Ansari's wife Afsan Ansari, son Abbas Ansari and father-in-law Jamshed Raza.

The property was released by the bank after the loan was paid back and it was transferred to the alleged benamidar Sahar in November 2020.

The department suspects that Sahar — the wife of Niyaz Ahmad and a resident of Mahanagar in Lucknow — is an associate/aide of the Ansari family. The Income Tax department found that Sahar has never filed an Income Tax Return and did not have a sufficient source of income to purchase the Dalibagh plot that has been attached under the anti-benami law, apart from a few others.

The department concluded that Sahar was a "dummy owner or benamidar" of the property. The tax officials also summoned her for questioning but she is yet to depose before them. Income Tax department sources had earlier said that they were working to attach about 20-21 more alleged benami properties of Ansari's family, estimated to have a market value of over Rs 100 crore, as part of Operation Panther.

IT dept attaches second property in benami assets case against Mukhtar

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Income Tax department has attached a second land property worth about Rs 10 crore in Lucknow as part of its ongoing alleged benami assets possession probe against gangster-politician Mukhtar Ansari and his family.

The department's Benami Assets Investigation wing, headquartered here, has codenamed the comprehensive probe Operation Panther.

It has found that the 'benamidar (in whose name a benami property is standing)' of the 3,234-square feet plot at 13-C/3 in Lucknow's Dalibagh area is a Ghazipur-based woman named Tanveer Sahar.

The department attached the plot under Section 24(3) read with Rule-5 of the Prohibition of Benami Properties Transaction Act on September 29 as it found that the linked people are "very influential" and that the property is located in a prime location and can be disposed of clandestinely.

While the plot's stamp valuation is just over Rs 76 lakh, official sources pegged its market value at about Rs 10 crore.

In April, the department had attached the first property in the case against Ansari, located at Mauja Kapurpur NZA under Sadar tehsil in Uttar Pradesh's Ghazipur district, and identified his alleged associate — Ganesh Dutt Mishra — as the benamidar of this about Rs 12 crore-worth land. The taxman unearthed the latest asset (in Lucknow's Dalibagh) after prolonged questioning of Mishra and

the advisor to the chief minister, Awanish Kumar Awasthi spoke about the government's effort to double farmers' income. Also present were Deputy Commissioner of Food Safety & Drugs Administration Hari Shankar Singh, assistant commissioner Vinit Singh and assistant professor, Institute of Food Technology and Processing (IU), Vidyanand Tiwari.

UP minister Suresh Khanna inaugurated the cardiology department at Career Institute of Medical Sciences and Hospital. He also met patients and asked them about their well-being. Physician Dr Kausar Usman, cardiologist Dr Rishi Sethi, Dr Irshad, Azmat Ali and Iqbal Ali were present on the occasion.

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India hosted the Lucknow leg of the nationwide 'Basmati Rice No Compromise' public internet education and awareness initiative. India Gate Basmati Rice has taken an initiative in promoting healthier eating habits, encouraging balanced nutrition, and enhance food safety awareness among consumers. On this occasion,

A workshop on fish conservation and management was organised at ICAR-NBFGR. The chief guest and speaker was Dr Bimal Prasanna Mohanty, a renowned fishery scientist and assistant director general (inland fisheries), ICAR, New Delhi. He said that fish conservation and management are important for aquaculture, which is one of the fastest growing food production sectors and can play a big role in eradicating hunger, malnutrition and nutrient-deprivation globally. He said

Class V Dalit student killed for 'stealing' sugarcane from field

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a shocking incident, a minor Dalit boy was killed in Hardoi district just for allegedly stealing a sugarcane from a field in the village. The accused was arrested. The superintendent of police (SP) has announced a cash reward of Rs 10,000 to the team that worked out the murder case.

As per reports, the victim, who was a Class V student, had gone to his school on September 25 but did not return home until late evening. While searching for him, his parents found his body lying in the sugarcane field of Shahabuddin, who is a resident of Mujha Mahra Para.

The victim was identified as Mukesh, who was the son of Rambachan, and a resident of Nai Basti area that falls under the Manjhila police station

area. The police registered a case on the basis of a complaint by the father of the deceased and started an inquiry.

The police scanned CCTV footage in the area and also deployed a team to investigate the case. Four teams were deployed, as was a SWAT surveillance team, to investigate the case and nab the accused.

After a thorough investigation, the police zeroed in on a suspect, Ismail Khan. The police took him into custody and interrogated him on Saturday evening. The accused confessed to have murdered the child. Ismail said that he clubbed the kid for stealing a sugarcane from the field.

Meanwhile, a 16-year-old boy was smothered to death in Rajpur Khamrup village on Friday allegedly by his friend after he asked him to return Rs 30, borrowed a few days ago.

CITYBRIEFS

'AI TO PLAY VITAL ROLE IN IVF TREATMENT'



Technology and treatment go hand in hand and with the help of artificial intelligence (AI) in IVF treatment, the accuracy of problem detection, timeliness of dosage and actual monitoring will be a boon for doctors, said Dr Gita Khanna, an IVF expert and vice-president of Indian Fertility Society (IFS). She further said that AI may increasingly integrate into various aspects of IVF to enhance success rates, improve patient experiences, and advance the field through data-driven insights and automation. However, AI is still a relatively new technology in the field of IVF, but it has the potential

to revolutionise the way infertility is treated, Dr Gita Khanna said while addressing media-persons at a CME on 'Recent trends in treatment and technology in ART', organised by IFS and Ajanta Hope Society at a city hotel on Sunday. Starlwards of IVF from across the country delivered talks which were attended by 400-odd gynaecologists.

WORKSHOP

A workshop on fish conservation and management was organised at ICAR-NBFGR. The chief guest and speaker was Dr Bimal Prasanna Mohanty, a renowned fishery scientist and assistant director general (inland fisheries), ICAR, New Delhi. He said that fish conservation and management are important for aquaculture, which is one of the fastest growing food production sectors and can play a big role in eradicating hunger, malnutrition and nutrient-deprivation globally. He said

that fish is a healthy food, rich in quality protein, polyunsaturated fatty acids, especially the Omega 3 eicosapentaenoic acid and docosahexaenoic acid and micronutrients. "In addition, fish are more available and affordable than other sources of animal protein in tropical countries," he said. Meanwhile ICAR-NBFGR organised a 10-day training on 'Emerging tools and methodologies in conservation biology of fishes' for research scholars and students under the guidance of director Dr UK Sarkar.

AWARENESS INITIATIVE

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CARDIOLOGY DEPT INAUGURATED

UP minister Suresh Khanna inaugurated the cardiology department at Career Institute of Medical Sciences and Hospital. He also met patients and asked them about their well-being. Physician Dr Kausar Usman, cardiologist Dr Rishi Sethi, Dr Irshad, Azmat Ali and Iqbal Ali were present on the occasion.

CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE

It has been notified that I have changed my name from Akhilesh Kumar Tiwari to Akhilesh Kumar Tripathi. In future I will be known as Akhilesh Kumar Tripathi only. Akhilesh Kumar Tripathi S/o Vijay Bahadur Tiwari R/O- 319, Shakti Nagar, Indira Nagar, Lucknow U.P.

सूचना

मैंने सूचना दी है कि मैंने अपना नाम अखिलेश कुमार तिवारी से अखिलेश कुमार त्रिपाठी में बदल दिया है। भविष्य में मैं अखिलेश कुमार त्रिपाठी के नाम से जाना जाऊंगा। अखिलेश कुमार त्रिपाठी, स/o विजय बाहादुर तिवारी, र/ओ- 319, शक्ति नगर, इंदिरा नगर, लखनऊ, यूपी।

CM Yogi gifts Sitapur projects worth ₹550 crore

PNS ■ SITAPUR

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath gifted development projects worth over Rs 550 crore for Sitapur on Sunday. He inaugurated 29 projects worth Rs 91 crore and laid the foundation stones for 45 projects worth Rs 460 crore.

Addressing the cleanliness awareness programme and public meeting organised at Naimisharanya near Maharishi Ved Vyas Dham in Sitapur, the chief minister appealed to people to make Sitapur clean and beautiful.

"The government will guarantee minimum wages to all the sanitation workers. A committee has been formed and its report will be implemented by the government," he said.

The chief minister said that it was a matter of good fortune for him to visit the pilgrimage site whose glory had been sung by Saint Tulsidas in Ramcharit Manas.

He acknowledged the historical significance of the land, where Maharishi Dadhichi made a selfless sacrifice against demonic forces and where Suti narrated ancient tales to 88,000 sages like Shaunak, preserving India's knowledge tradition as a cherished legacy for future generations. However, after independence, this sacred land, including the Ashram of Maharishi Ved Vyas and other holy pilgrimage sites in the area, was neglected.

The chief minister said that today the entire Naimish Teerth was shining. "We have to keep our pilgrimage sites clean and beautiful not only during festivals but always. The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath performing puja at Naimisharanya Dham in Sitapur on Sunday. Pioneer

encouraged the spirit of cleanliness and transformed it into a mass movement," he said.

"Earlier, several diseases used to occur in this season. There were outbreaks of malaria, cholera, diarrhoea, chikungunya and encephalitis. However, due to widespread cleanliness malaria, filariasis, dengue or chikungunya and other diseases are on the verge of extinction," he added.

The chief minister made special mention of the beneficiaries of public welfare schemes of the government without any discrimination in Sitapur and emphasised that no one can now claim to be left out of these initiatives. The double-engine government is ready for cooperation at every level.

He noted that over 2,34,800 families have received housing under the PM Awas Yojana. Furthermore over 7,16,500

families have been provided with toilets, 2,17,000 families have received tap connections in their homes, while over 5,78,900 free cooking gas connections have been distributed through the Ujjwala Yojana and 55,000 daughters have benefited from the Kanya Sumangala Yojana.

The chief minister also discussed the broad range of beneficiaries under various welfare schemes, including free electricity connection, Kisan Samman Nidhi, Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana, SVANidhi Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana and Soil Health Card, reaffirming that these schemes are being implemented without any discrimination.

The chief minister said that it was the time of 'Pitra Paksha', during which it was essential to express gratitude to

our ancestors through cleanliness.

"We should express our gratitude to our ancestors by keeping rivers, pilgrimage sites, monasteries, temples, roads, schools, hospitals, parks etc clean and in good shape," he further urged.

The chief minister also conducted a review of the ongoing projects and developmental works under Naimisharanya Dham Teerth Vikas Parishad.

During the review, he assessed the progress of projects related to the renovation, reconstruction, and beautification of Naimisharanya Dham and the adjacent tourist attractions.

CM Yogi set a time limit for every project and gave instructions to complete it in a timely manner, ensuring quality. He collected information

'Ample funds for Naimish Dham development'

PNS ■ SITAPUR

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday said that development of Naimisharanya on the lines of Ayodhya was the priority of his government.

During his one-day visit to Chakratirtha in Naimisharanya Dham, the chief minister also emphasised that there was no dearth of funds for the development of Naimish Tirtha.

Yogi also offered prayers and performed havan as per the rituals during his visit. The chief minister visited the ancient Bhuteswarnath temple and Maa Lalita Devi temple.

Besides, the chief minister performed shramdaan at Chakratirtha along with the saints, mahants and priests of various monasteries and temples of Naimish Teertha.

Earlier, during the conversation with the saints and saints, the chief minister urged them to maintain cleanliness and ensure that monasteries and temples are completely plastic-free.

This was Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's fifth visit to Naimish Tirtha, the holy abode of 88,000 illustrious sages including Maharaj Manu, Ved Vyas and Maharishi Dadhichi, after taking charge of the state of Uttar Pradesh.

The saints praised the unprecedented development in Naimish Tirtha during their meeting with the chief minister. They expressed special gratitude to Yogi and said that Naimish Teerth held an invaluable place among the Sanatani devotees of the entire country and its beauty had been enriched by the development works carried out in this government. They also invited the chief minister to visit their respective temples and monasteries.

from the officials about the arrangements at major places like Chakratirtha, Maa Lalita Devi Temple, Vyas Gaddi, Soot Gaddi etc. and gave necessary guidelines. The Chief Minister



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath taking part in the cleanliness drive in Naimisharanya Dham on Sunday. Pioneer

Addressing the saints and priests, the chief minister said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had given a call to pay homage to Mahatma Gandhi. "It is our responsibility to make cleanliness a mass movement instead of making it a one-day programme. Cleanliness is the first necessity of life. Especially in places of pilgrimage, monasteries, temples and every place that people visit, we have to be sensitive towards cleanliness," he remarked.

Yogi said that the government was committed to restore the Vedic and mythological glory of this region. He pointed out that earlier the place was neglected and denied development despite being located near the capital Lucknow.

"Today, work is going on at a fast pace to provide electric bus service and helicopter service as well as to widen the roads here. However, the development that has happened here so far is only a small glimpse of the larger picture. A lot of work still remains to be done here," he further added. "The whole country wants to come to Naimisharanya today. After the construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya, the number of devotees will increase further. Therefore, we have to create a conducive environment, which can be achieved only with cleanliness. Along with this, we have to ensure that the visitors and tourists coming here are treated well," the chief minister stated.

rapidly. Sitapur district would be prominently marked on the tourism map.

On this occasion, state government ministers Mayankeshwar Sharan Singh,

Suresh Rahi, MP Rajesh Verma, BJP regional president Kamlesh Mishra, MLAs, Legislative Council members, former MLAs and BJP officials were present.

Conduct weekly review of every police station: CM

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed officials to hold review meetings from district to zonal levels in order to improve the law and order situation in the state.

These meetings will encompass discussions on criminal occurrences as well as pending cases and action should be taken against those who are negligent, the chief minister said during a law and order review meeting on Sunday.

He emphasised that each incident serves as a lesson, urging field officers to be vigilant in order to prevent the recurrence of such incidents in the state, enabling timely intervention.

Directives were also issued to run the Anti-Romeo campaign again in the state to prevent crimes against women. Simultaneously, Yogi also gave instructions to form a cyber crime police station at the district level and a cyber cell at the police station level across the state.

Furthermore, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath issued instructions to the SSP/SP of each district to conduct a weekly review of every police station, aiming to reduce criminal incidents across Uttar Pradesh, achieve 100 per cent resolution of complaint letters, expedite the processing of charge sheets, and address pending cases.

Additionally, he directed the scheduling of fortnightly reviews with ADG IG Range and monthly reviews with DGP ADG Zone.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that regular meetings of the District Monitoring Committee (comprising DM, SP/SSP, Commissioner and District Judge) were encouraged to ensure timely filing of chargesheets. Special attention should be devoted to cases involving POCSO violations and crimes against women, the chief minister said. He stressed the importance of taking stringent action in cases related to Love Jihad under the new law.

Yogi said that most police stations in the state now have CCTV cameras and instructed officers to finish installing the remaining ones within a week.

Currently, cybercrime police stations have been established at the range level, and the process to establish them at the district level should be started, he further added.

Similarly, the operation of cyber cells

British MP becomes admirer of Yogi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In an achievement for the Yogi Adityanath government, British Member of Parliament Virendra Sharma sent a postcard congratulating the chief minister for the changed perception of Uttar Pradesh.

It is noteworthy that the members of the Parliament in Britain are appreciating the peace that has come in Uttar Pradesh due to the strong law and order system under Yogi government.

In the postcard, the British MP wrote, "Honorable Yogi Adityanath, I would like to congratulate you for achieving great successes in UP and bringing peace to the state."

Besides, Shantanu Gupta, the biographer of the life of Yogi Adityanath, was invited to the International Conclave organised at the House of Commons of the British Parliament and was honoured with the Global Gandhi Award 2023.

On this occasion, Shantanu presented his best-selling graphic novel, 'Ajay to Yogi Adityanath', as a gift to British MP Virendra Sharma.

Speaking at the House of Commons, author Shantanu Gupta discussed the developmental journey of Uttar Pradesh. He said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had created 'Brand India' across the world, because of which Indians were given more importance across the world today. 'Brand UP' had become a strong brand across India.

at the district level should be extended to the police station level and appropriate training for police personnel should be provided. Furthermore, he emphasised that even after the operation of the cyber cell at the police station level, the operation of the cyber help desk does not stop.

The chief minister also directed the officials to keep a close watch on negative news on social media to maintain peace in the state. With the festive season approaching, there tends to be increased activity by some anti-social elements on social media, the CM said, asking officers to make a list and take action against such individuals.

The chief minister also instructed offi-

Shantanu further said that the same Uttar Pradesh, which was once known for anarchy, corruption and inefficient governance, is now a top investment destination under the Yogi government. In the ranking of 'Ease of Doing Business', UP had jumped from 14th place before 2017 to second position.

"Uttar Pradesh is currently ranked number 1 in the implementation of more than 40 schemes of the Central government. Today, Uttar Pradesh is known for its achievements such as the Uttar Pradesh Expressway, new airports, 24-hour electricity, and a strong law and order situation," he said.

Shantanu also shared some fascinating conversations between himself and Yogi Adityanath's father, Anand Singh Bisht. The author told the participants in the British Parliament that during his research for the book, Anand Ji revealed that a small blue one-and-a-half-room house in Panchur village was his only possession in life. This was all he could earn in his lifetime from the humble job of a forest guard. Shantanu mentioned that Anand paused for a while, grabbed his hand, and with great pride, said that his most valuable asset in life was his 'honest Chief Minister son'.

"Although Anand Ji is no longer with us, the sentiment of 'Honest Chief Minister's son' still resonates in my mind, and it's safe to say that this feeling echoes throughout all 75 districts of Uttar Pradesh today," he added.

cially to closely monitor negative social media content to maintain peace in the state.

"With the upcoming festive season, some anti-social elements tend to become more active on social media. The police should compile a list and take action against such individuals," the chief minister said.

Furthermore, recognising the favourable investment climate in the state, the chief minister stressed the importance of ensuring a hassle-free experience for investors. To achieve this, he proposed deploying 'Nivesh Mitras' in every police station to promptly address any concerns or issues raised by investors.

CM: Police Telecommunication plays key role in accurate information



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath during Police Telecommunication Foundation Day programme at the Police Radio Headquarters in Lucknow on Sunday. Pioneer

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday stated that history bears witness to the fact that any force equipped with proper training, tools, and weapons has always emerged victorious.

He made this remark while speaking at the Police Telecommunication Foundation Day programme held at the Police Radio Headquarters. The chief minister emphasised that the Police Telecommunication department not only facilitates the exchange of information but also plays a significant role in obtaining and delivering accurate information to all locations. "The police force responsible for internal security and law enforcement understands the importance of technology," he said.

At the outset of the event, the chief minister was given the Guard of Honor, and then he inaugurated and reviewed the JC Bose Technology exhibition. CM Yogi extended his best wishes for the events scheduled to take place from October 1 to October 3 to mark the Foundation Day.

The chief minister said that the state government had got the opportunity to organise the country's biggest cultural event of Kumbh Mela Prayagraj in 2019. He said that it was the first time such a massive event was organised in Uttar Pradesh.

"It was a matter of curiosity to observe the way the police conducted their work, their behavior, and the technology they employed. The results were witnessed not only by the entire nation but also by the world," he said. CM Yogi said that the UP Police first used wireless sets in

1938. This was during the Kumbh Mela in Haridwar, which was where the journey began. During that Kumbh Mela, the Police Radio department was established, and it was a significant challenge to figure out which communication tools to use in such a massive gathering to provide information and prevent panic or rumours. Yogi further said that earlier the police relied on three teams of elephants to facilitate communication, and through their efforts, the UP Police continued to provide communication services as the Kumbh Mela progressed. The establishment of the Radio Headquarters in 2019 marked the transition from using elephants to handsets.

"Now, we can provide information through mobile phones, which signifies progress. We cannot afford to lose to technology. We need to

integrate technology into our systems along with proper training. This technology, created by us, continues to advance our department and is essential in today's world," the chief minister said.

Yogi mentioned that back in 2017 when the new government was formed, there were only two police stations in Lucknow and Noida that were dealing with cybercrime. Today, approval has been given for the establishment of cyber police stations in all 75 districts.

On this occasion, Chief Secretary Durga Shankar Mishra, Principal Secretary (Home) Sanjay Prasad, Director General of Police Vijay Kumar, DG Special Law and Order Prashant Kumar, Director General (Police Telecommunications) Sanjay Tarde and Director (Police Telecommunications) Sunil Kumar Singh were present.

BJP to woo Dalit voters through 'Panchteerth'

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

To expand its Dalit outreach ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the Bharatiya Janata Party is mulling a proposal to take members of the Scheduled Caste communities in Uttar Pradesh on a 'Panchteerth' tour.

'Panchteerth' is a religious tour of the five important places associated with the life of BR Ambedkar. BJP has planned to organise Anusuchit Jati Sammelan in five Prants (regions) of the state - Avadh, Kashi, Brij, Paschim, Gorakhpur and Kanpur.

"We are working out modalities in this regard and are awaiting the nod from the party leadership. This will be our gift to Dalits," said a senior BJP leader.

The five 'Panchteerth' destinations include Ambedkar's birthplace at Mhow in Madhya Pradesh, the three-storeyed house in London where he stayed while studying at the London School of Economics, Deeksha-bhoomi in Nagpur, where Ambedkar embraced Buddhism, 26 Alipur Road in New Delhi, where he died, and the site in Mumbai where Ambedkar was cremated.

Barring London, the BJP plans to include as many as destinations possible in the itinerary.

The BJP leadership is said to have tasked its SC Morcha to draw a blueprint for the execution of the ambitious idea that could potentially help the saffron outfit bolster its outreach among Dalits, who account for around 21 per cent of the total electorate in the country.

"The Dalit community certainly considers Ambedkar its icon, its God. And there is little doubt that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is fulfilling the aspirations of Dalits in all possible ways. As far as the

Panchteerth are concerned, they undoubtedly symbolise Dalit emancipation in the most profound manner," said Uttar Pradesh BJP SC Morcha chief Ram Chandra Kannaujia.

The idea, if implemented, could have a far-reaching impact, especially in Uttar Pradesh, where Dalits play the most crucial role in deciding the electoral fortunes of political parties. The BJP has especially been looking for all possible ways to consolidate the Jatav sub-castes among Dalits, the core vote-bank of Bahujan Samaj Party. In fact, two Jatav leaders, former IPS officer

Aseem Arun and former Uttarakhnd Governor Baby Rani Maurya, are playing a key role in winning over Dalit votes. The proposal has already given a jolt to BSP and a senior BSP leader termed the BJP's plans as 'mere eye wash to divert people's attention from the atrocities committed against Dalits.' "The incident involving a BJP member urinating on a mentally challenged tribal in Madhya Pradesh is indicative of the ruling party's mentality. People are witnessing and comprehending such actions by BJP members," said a BSP leader.

BSP to maintain distance from NDA, INDIA bloc

Lucknow (PNS): Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati on Sunday reiterated her stand to maintain complete distance from the ruling NDA and the opposition INDIA bloc for the next year's Lok Sabha elections and said that the party has to move forward by working on its own strengths.

In a statement issued here on Sunday, the UP unit of the BSP said, "BSP chief and former UP chief minister Mayawati held a discussion with senior and responsible people of the party regarding preparedness of the party for the upcoming Lok Sabha polls.

Discussions were also held for preparedness in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhnd."

"During the discussion, she once again made it clear that the BSP has to work by strengthening itself, while maintaining complete distance from the ruling NDA and the opposition INDIA bloc," the statement said.

Mayawati urged party members to be alert to fake news, and said that anti-BSP elements are still engaged in propaganda and political conspiracy.

"So, precaution has to be taken at every level, so that our election preparedness is not

affected," she said.

In the meeting, Mayawati took note of BJP government's new election strategy, but said that people are still facing issues such as inflation, extreme poverty, unemployment, decrease in income, bad condition of roads, law and order, and poor health and educational facilities. However, it is unclear if these problems will become serious election issues, she said.

"This is because when it comes to issues of public interest and public welfare, the attitude of the BJP and Congress is almost the same, and it is anti-people," Mayawati said.

GIL, OPF officials conduct special cleanliness drive

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The senior officials of Gliders India Ltd (GIL) and Ordnance Parachute Factory (OPF) carried out a special cleanliness drive titled 'Kachramukt Bharat' on Sunday. The drive was a part of the special campaign launched by the Government of India and each official performed an hour long 'shramdaan' to clean the GT Road near the GIL office. The OITC and Director (HR& Operations) Sunil Date said the success of this drive is in its continuity. He said the GIL has always been in the forefront of such activities which placed India on a higher pedestal before the entire world. He said the initiative of Prime Minister Narendra Modi was focused on developing an integrated waste management system. Director (Finance) Surendra Dhaporkar, addressing the gathering, said it was highly essential that every person needs to become more serious



The officials of Gliders India Ltd and Ordnance Parachute Factory on Sunday cleaning the GT Road as part of the 'Kachramukt Bharat'

on the cleanliness of the nation. He said not only the houses need to be kept clean but the residents should also keep the surroundings and vicinity equally clean. He said the principle was neither to litter nor allow others to litter. He said every Indian has to take pride in this drive and take pride in claiming a clean and green India. Addressing the gathering General Manager MC Balasubramanian said one of

the most effective interventions to prevent littering was to clean dirty space. He said clean environments will motivate people not to litter. He said littering also had indirect economic costs when it came to real estate, loss of tourism and loss of new industry and businesses not to mention the damage to the image of the local community and even Ganga. He said even though it was a global problem, littering can be

controlled and one can help make a difference. Earlier the entire staff and officials gathered on the GT Road with brooms and cleared the garbage in the surrounding areas. The officials carried out the road sweeping drive. The drive was likely to continue for the whole week. Others present were S Banerjee, Vivek Gupta, KK Toppo, Amardeep Kumar, JK Pandey and KD Mishra.

GIRL MISSING: A teenage girl was found missing under mysterious circumstances from a village in the Narval police station area. On failing to trace her, her kin lodged a complaint with the police which started probing the issue. The 16-year old daughter of the farmer had suddenly gone missing on Saturday. In his complaint kin said a youth Govind of Khaga (Fatehpur) had enticed his daughter away. Narval inspector Jitendra Kumar said after lodging a first information report (FIR) efforts are on to trace the missing girl.

Programme offers 'swachhanjali' to Gandhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Kanpur Development Authority (KDA) organised a 'shramdaan karein' programme on the eve of Gandhi Jayanti on Sunday. Secretary Shatrohan Vaishya inaugurated the programme by cleaning the KDA campus. He was accompanied by Additional Secretary Dr Gudakesh Sharma, Chief Engineer Ashutosh Srivastava, Law Officer SB Rai and other employees who also contributed to the cause. The programme aimed at offering 'swachhanjali' to Mahatma Gandhi on the eve of his birth



KDA secretary S Vaishya taking part in the cleanliness drive with other officials

anniversary. Secretary Shatrohan Vaishya encouraged all the officers/employees to inculcate the 'Swachhata Hi Seva' sense in them and emulate the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi. Meanwhile, teaching and non-

teaching staff of Harsabai PG College, P Road, also took part in the cleanliness drive organised in college campus under the 'swachhata campaign' on Sunday. Prominent persons present were Dr Sushil Kumar Srivastava, Vivek Nigam, Amit

Singh, Shyam Bahadur, Manoj Kumar and Dr Pradip Mishra.

PLAY: The week-long classic play 'Janata Raja' that captures the life and times of warrior king Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, started at the CSA ground here on Sunday. President of the Janata Raja Mahanatyami Samiti Dr Umesh Paliwal said over 300 professional and amateur actors, including around 150 local artistes, were performing on the stage. He said the Samiti had organised this play in 2018 for the first time in UP. This historical play was again organised here to publicise the character and life of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

Communicable disease control drive from tomorrow

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A special Communicable Disease Control Month campaign will be started in the district from Tuesday. This campaign will run till October 31. Meanwhile, Dastak Abhiyan will run from October 16 to 31. In this regard, an inter-departmental coordination meeting regarding preparations for the campaign was

organised under the direction of CMO Dr Sandeep Chaudhary at his office here on Saturday. Deputy CMO Dr HC Maurya, presiding over the meeting, said this campaign will be conducted throughout the month of October for the prevention of communicable diseases like dengue, malaria, TB, filariasis etc with mutual coordination between various departments including health.

"Micro plans have been received from all the departments to make the campaign 100 per cent successful. This campaign can be made 100 per cent successful only with the coordination of all departments," he said, adding the district administration and all allied departments including the Health department will have to take concrete steps to prevent dengue. "Maximum

publicity work should be done for prevention and control of infectious diseases. Cleanliness campaigns should be run especially in slum areas in urban areas. Mosquito source reduction work should be done through cleanliness, spraying of pesticide chemicals, fogging, drainage of water logging, destruction of breeding places of mosquitoes, preventing breeding," he said.

BOI officers, employees take part in cleanliness drive with enthusiasm

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The zonal office of Bank of India (BOI) carried out the cleanliness drive under the Swachh Bharat Mission and Swachhata Hi Seva campaigns at the Nanarao Ghat, Cantonment, on Sunday. All the bank officers and employees took part in the drive with enthusiasm.

Besides, the drive was also carried out at some other prominent places, including Ganesh Udyan, Mall Road



Kanpur, Panki Dham Mandir, UPSIDA building Dahi Chowki, Rashtra Kavi and Dr Maithili Sharan Gupt Park Chirgaon. Prominent persons present in the drive were Zonal Manager Neeraj Tewari, Deputy Zonal Manager Jugal Kishore, Assistant General Manager Amitabh Shukla, Chief Manager Pankaj Singh and Senior Manager Sarvesh Singh.

Officials of Bank of India, Zonal Office, taking part in cleanliness drive on Sunday.

BOB committed to a clean, green future

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Under the 'Swachhata Hi Seva Abhiyan' campaign, Bank of Baroda (BOB) organised 'Ek Tarikh, Ek Ghanta, Ek Saath' programme simultaneously at its 345 centres nationwide on Sunday.

In this context the bank organised the programme at five public places in Kanpur - Ghatampur CHC, Bithoor Ghat, Pani Tanki Park-Darshanpurwa, Panki Mandir and Trilokpur Gaushala in Chaubepur Development Block - under the leadership of its zonal chief Sachin Verma and district manager Dipendra Shukla. Bank



The employees of Bank of Baroda taking part in the cleanliness drive on Sunday.

employees took part in the programme in large number and offered 'shramdaan'. Hundreds of local people also ensured their presence in the cleanliness drive.

In his message sent to all the centres, Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Devdutt Chand said the bank was committed to a clean and green future being a responsible organisation of corporate sector. He said the bank had recently launched 'banking for a greener planet' programme which was an important step in protection, conservation and safety of the environment.

Blood donation camp held

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

On Voluntary Blood Donation Day, the Red Cross Society organised a blood donation camp at Cawnpore Club, Cantonment, on Sunday. It was inaugurated by officer-in-charge, UHM Hospital Bhook Bank Dr Richa Bajpai, President Dr Umesh Paliwal, treasurer Dr Angad Singh and Secretary RK Saffar by lighting the ceremonial lamp. DM Vishakh G Iyer, while distributing the certificates to donors, said blood donated by them can save lives. As many as 43 persons, includ-



ing Lakhna Shukla, master trainer Red Cross Vishal Bhartiya, Radha and Sanjay Agarwal, donated blood. Dr Umesh Paliwal, while expressing gratitude to the donors, said people who donate blood always remain energetic and free from ailments. Dr Richa Bajpai said fresh blood was gen-

erated in one's body after he/she donates it. She said the blood donated once can save the life of four persons. Therefore, 'rakt-daan' was called the 'mahadaan', she added. RK Saffar and master trainer Lakhna Shukla highlighted the importance of blood donation. AN Dwivedi and RP Mishra were also present.

Two held for making fake pan masala

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Chakeri police on Saturday arrested two persons involved in the manufacture of fake pan masala. On a tip off the police and Food department teams raided the spot and busted the unit. The Food department officials collected the samples of pan masala and thereafter police took two persons into custody. During quizzing, they informed that the unit was being run by the landlord Ashish. The unit was situated in a house in Rampuram, Shyam Nagar, Chakeri. The police recovered huge packing material and the raw material used in manufacturing the fake pan masala from the spot. Station House Officer Neeraj Babu said on a tip off, police raided the spot and arrested Dharmendra and Raghvendra. Raids were on to arrest Ashish, he said. The recovered goods include 185 packets of SNK pan masala, eight packets of Madhu pan masala, 23.1 kg wrapper of Madhu pan masala, 29.3 kg wrapper of SNK pan masala, 12,700 kg katechu powder, 34,300 kg of loose processed pan masala, 13,300 kg of Maikal powder, one electronic balance of Konika Co, sacks stitching machine, one packing machine, one electric bettlenut cutting machine, one Android mobile phone and Rs 820 cash.

ANNIVERSARY: Aatmoday Club, a vibrant cultural hub, celebrated its first anniversary with a grand event encapsulating the spirit of cultural unity and artistic expression at the CSJM University on Saturday. This event marked a significant milestone in the club's journey of promoting cultural awareness and exchange. The captivating affair unfolded in the premises of Virangna Rani Laxmi Bai auditorium. The occasion featured an array of captivating activities and competition that engaged the participants. The event saw the cake cutting ceremony in presence of the distinguished personalities. Dr Vandhana Pathak was the chief guest along with Vice-Chancellor Prof Vinay Kumar Pathak and Pro Vice-Chancellor Prof Sudhir Kumar Awasthi.

56 bone marrow transplants in 18 months

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Homi Bhabha Cancer Hospital (HBCH), situated in Lahartara, has successfully completed 56 bone marrow transplants (BMT) in a span of 18 months. The procedure has proven to be a successful treatment modality for individuals with serious blood and bone marrow related conditions, such as multiple myeloma, lymphoma leukemias and certain pediatric cancers such as neuroblastoma. This facility, equipped with advanced technology and a proficient team, offers one of the most cost-effective BMT treatments of this region.

The initiative to start the BMT programme at HBCH began in 2019, paused temporarily in 2020 due to the Covid pandemic but has been running seamlessly from December 2021. Out of the completed transplants, 52 were autologous and four were allogeneic. Majority of recipients were aged between 18 and 50 years. This is a collaborative effort of a multidisciplinary team, encompassing experts from various fields such as adult and pediatric medical oncology, haematopathology, microbiology, transfusion medicine, and critical care team.

"All team members played a crucial role in managing the complex process effectively.



HBCH team which successfully conducted 56 bone marrow transplants in last 18 months in Varanasi.

Notably, a significant majority of the patients, 53 in total, have demonstrated excellent recovery post-transplant, with no fatalities reported in the critical 100-day period following the procedure," said Dr Anant Gokarn and Dr Sumeet Mirgh, hematologists in the BMT unit. Concerning the financial aspects of BMT, the team noted that the treatment, while generally expensive, is offered at approximately one-third of the cost compared to other hospitals of the region. Collaborations with NGOs and government relief funds have been instrumental in aiding economically disadvantaged patients in managing the expenses, they added.

Commenting on the achievement Dr RA Badwe, Director, Tata Memorial Centre, Mumbai said, "Bone

Marrow Transplant is a high-intensity niche treatment for cancer. There are not many hospitals that offer this treatment for cancer and for exclusively cancer Tata Memorial Centre is the only institute that offers this treatment. In Varanasi, the HBCH, which is a sister institution of Tata Memorial Centre has completed 56 bone marrow transplants, 90 per cent of them at a hugely subsidised rate or free bone marrow transplants. These are life-saving procedures that require a team effort as well as an infrastructure that cannot be mimicked at 100 places. It is a matter of pride that we are able to create such a team in Varanasi to offer the best care for lymphoma, leukemia, and myeloma."

Dr Satyajit Pradhan, Director of Mahamana Pandit

Madan Mohan Malaviya Cancer Centre (MPMMCC) and HBCH, stated that the institution is steadfast in its commitment to offering superior healthcare facilities and treatments to all patients, including specialised care for pediatric cancer and blood cancer cases. He praised the team effort saying that it was possible due to relentless efforts of many specialities of BMT team (Dr Anant Gokarn, Dr Lingaraj Nayak, Dr Sumeet Mirgh, Dr Malini Garg, Dr Sujeet Kumar, Dr Anil Singh), hematopathology (Dr Neha Singh, Dr Avinash Gupta), microbiology (Dr Rahul Sarode, Dr Sujit Bharti, Dr Ankita Chaurasia), transfusion medicine (Dr Akshay Batra), biochemistry (Dr Pratibha Gavel, Dr Priyanka Asia), cytogenetics (Anil Yadav), paediatric oncology (Dr Vikramjit Kanwar, Dr Ragwesh Ranjan), paediatric surgery (Dr Soumitra Saha) and anaesthesia (Dr Jyotirmay Kirtaniya), under the guidance of Dr Navin Khattry (Deputy Director, ACTREC, Tata Memorial Centre, Mumbai), Dr Pankaj Chaturvedi (Deputy Director, CCE, Tata Memorial Centre, Mumbai), Dr BK Mishra (Deputy Director, HBCH Varanasi) and Dr Satyajit Pradhan (Director MPMMCC & HBCH, Varanasi).

NHM mission director inspects HWCs

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Mission Director, National Health Mission (NHM), Uttar Pradesh, Dr Pinky Jewel inspected the Ayushman Melas organised at Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) Koruta and Thathra in the district here on Saturday. Under the Ayushman Bhava campaign being run from September 17 to October 2, Ayushman Melas are being organised every Saturday at the HWCs. This time the theme of the fair was reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health along with nutrition (RMNCHA Plus N).

Dr Jewel first inspected the Ayushman Mela organised at Koruta HWC under Kashi Vidyapeeth block. During this, she took information from CHO Priya Mall and the beneficiaries about the medical and

health services being provided in the health fair. She directed the CHO to provide primary medical and health facilities to all the people of the area keeping in mind the community based activities. Also, provide consultation to specialist doctors to serious patients through telemedicine service. In case of any problem, inform the superintendent of the nearest CHC so that the latter can provide treatment and referral facilities to the patient at his level, she said, asking the CHO to make the people aware about all the health schemes. By interacting with the gram pradhan and other members of the Panchayat, the Mission Director of NHM said better health facilities should be made available to as many people as possible. Apart from this, she took information from a 60-year-old woman beneficiary who came to the Koruta

HWC about the medicine prescribed for her knee pain. She also talked with another beneficiary, a 55 year old woman, about the necessary medicines prescribed by the CHO for her joint pain, back pain and weakness. Thereafter, the Mission Director inspected the Ayushman Mela organised at Thathra HWC under Sewapuri block. She took information from CHO Priya Singh and ANM Dharna Devi. She also met women and patients of self-help groups. During the inspection, Additional Director (Health) Dr Manjula Singh, ACOMO Dr SS Kanojia, Senior Medical Officer Dr Yatish Bhuvan Pathak, DPM Santosh Kumar Singh, DCPM Ramesh Prasad Verma, Superintendent Dr RB Singh, MOIC Dr Manoj Verma, BPM Meena Chaurasia, BPM Anup Mishra etc were present.

Importance of elderly highlighted

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

What children need most are the essentials that grandparents provide in abundance. They give unconditional love, kindness, patience, humour, comfort and lessons in life. A child needs grandparents to grow a little more securely



into an unfamiliar world. With its strong belief in the overall and holistic development of the child and to honour loving grandparents, Seth Anandram Jaipuria School, Pre-primary section celebrated Grandparents Day Yatra here on Saturday. The event commenced by welcoming the

grandparents with a welcome song sung by the tiny tots. Appropriate music and enthusiastic grandparents - grandchild combination made this event a runaway hit. The chief guest Prof Samsher (Vice-Chancellor of HBTU) highlighted the importance of having elderly people around us. Principal Shikha Banerjee, Vice-Principal (senior) Ganesh Tiwari, Vice-Principal (junior) Madhushree Bhaumik, Headmaster Mahesh Kumar Mishra and General Manager Shaileendra Agnihotri were present. The principal's emotional address left everyone speechless. It was a successful event and culminated with the vote of thanks by Vice-Principal Madhushree Bhaumik followed by the national anthem.

Research introduces novel approach to postoperative nutrition after GI surgery

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Groundbreaking research has introduced a novel approach to postoperative nutrition following gastrointestinal (GI) surgery, aimed at accelerating recovery and shortening hospital stays. This innovative concept, known as Patient-Controlled Nutrition (PCN), challenges conventional postoperative dietary practices, potentially transforming the standard of care for GI surgery patients. Dr Pradeep Joshi, Regency Hospital, a prominent expert in gastrointestinal surgery, highlighted the significance of this breakthrough. He said this paradigm shift empowers patients in their recovery journey. The ability to customise their diet

based on comfort levels has demonstrated remarkable outcomes, notably expediting the return to a regular diet. This holds tremendous promise for significantly reducing hospital stays and enhancing overall patient well-being. Moreover, it opens new avenues for tailoring nutritional strategies to specific surgical interventions, potentially optimising outcomes in a variety of gastrointestinal procedures. The potential for improved patient satisfaction and reduced healthcare costs cannot be overstated, marking a pivotal advancement in the field of perioperative nutrition, he added.

A recently conducted prospective randomised study demonstrated that patients in the PCN group were able to tol-

erate a regular diet an average of 5.5 ± 3.9 hours after surgery, in stark contrast to the traditional group, which took 18.3 ± 3.8 hours. This substantial difference challenges the long-standing belief that delayed advancement of the diet is necessary. Previous studies have shown that the conventional postoperative diet, often consisting of clear liquids and soft foods, may not offer significant benefits in terms of bowel function or patient comfort. This has prompted a reevaluation of established surgical practices, much like the reconsideration of routine nasogastric tube use after abdominal surgery in the past. The study also underscores the potential benefits of implementing Patient-Controlled Nutrition

as part of the Enhanced Recovery after Surgery (ERAS) programme, a comprehensive approach to postoperative care that includes various elements designed to expedite recovery. This pilot study, conducted on patients undergoing laparoscopic appendectomy for simple appendicitis, provides a promising foundation for further research. Future studies will explore the application of PCN in various other GI-related surgeries, potentially revolutionising postoperative nutrition practices across a broader spectrum of patients. The implications of this research are far-reaching, offering hope for improved outcomes and enhanced patient experience following gastrointestinal surgery, he 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.



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

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

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.



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

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

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.



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

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 Swachhha Pakhwada.



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,

The swachhha pakhwada started on September 16 with the administration of cleanliness 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.



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

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 Swachhtha 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.

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 (PIO), 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 Date, 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 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.

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.

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

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.

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

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.

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

"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

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

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.

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.

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, constables Pinki Jaiswal and Sapna, counsellors Nirmala Rai and Dr Krishna Singh along with others were present during the counselling.



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

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

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

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.

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.

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-

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 unconsciousness 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 Vijaijapura 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.

PICTALK



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

Gandhian approach to world peace

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



RAJUDEEP PATHAK

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 acknowledgement) 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

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-violence 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)



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

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 is 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 review 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 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.



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)

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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) Dhyan 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 re-defined 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 spate of student suicides in Kota (Rajasthan) speaks volumes of the gravity of the situation and



RC JILOHA

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 pan-

dem 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 men-

tal 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).

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

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.

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 "Swachhjanali" 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 exercise 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 Karmacharis 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 Service) 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-Gurdaspur 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.



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 Sheopur 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 Swachhata' 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.

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 unplug 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 Bhusan 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 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.

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Edtech 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



crore in 2019-20. Revenues during FY21 dropped to Rs 2,428 crore from Rs 2,511 crore in FY20. But in the fiscal ending March 31, 2022, the company had announced increase of revenue by four-fold to Rs 10,000 crore. However, it did not reveal

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.

"Our strong SUV portfolio has received a further boost with the exceptional customer response to the newly launched Exter," Garg said.

The company has garnered over 80,000 bookings for its recently introduced micro SUV Exter, he added.

Garg said SUVs now contribute more than 65 per cent to

Govt shutdown averted as Biden signs funding

AP ■ WASHINGTON

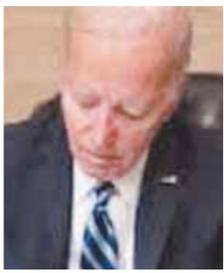
The threat of a federal government shutdown suddenly lifted late Saturday as President Joe Biden signed a temporary funding bill to keep agencies open with little time to spare after Congress rushed to approve the bipartisan deal.

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 at 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, his 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 avert 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-

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 Bagdasaryan, 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 presented in two parts: Karma setting out 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

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 FIA's Anti Human Trafficking and Smuggling

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.

Electronic Media thrash DD/AIR



Navneet Sehgal being introduced to the players

Lucknow (PNS): Electronic Media XI thrashed DD/AIR XI by nine wickets in the inaugural match of Ekana T20 Media Cup-2023 at the KD Singh 'Babu' Stadium on Sunday. Batting first, DD/AIR were bundled out for mere 71 runs in 16.5 overs with only Ram Balak (15) and Jitendra Kumar (12) managed to score in double figures.

Faheem took 3 wickets while Tarun Singh, Deepak Taneja and Mayur Shukla got two wickets each.

In reply, Electronic Media

XI achieved the target for the loss of a wicket. Mayur Shukla scored unbeaten 17 runs while Abhishek Mishra blasted unbeaten 45 runs in 27 balls with the help of six fours and a six.

Earlier, Retd IAS Navneet Sehgal and Managing Director of Ekana Sports City Uday Sinha inaugurated the tournament.

Today's fixture: Combined Media vs DDAIR (8:00 am) Hindustan Times vs Accredited Journalist (11:30 am).

Jerome Boateng trains with Bayern Munich

Munich: 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.

"This was a clear and obvious factual error and should have resulted in the goal being awarded through VAR intervention, however, the VAR failed to intervene," the PGMOL said in a statement.

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 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.

1 seconds later by Bagnaia, and 0.353 seconds by 2022 Japanese GP winner Jack Miller on KTM.

Sable becomes 1st Indian to win 3000m steeplechase title

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

Avinash Sable became the first Indian man to win the gold medal in 3000m steeplechase at the Asian Games while shot-putter Tajinderpal Singh Toor defended his title with an amazing final throw to beat back the challenge from his Saudi Arabian rival here on Sunday.

Sable, the 29-year-old national record holder, earned India its first gold medal in athletics, completing the race in 8:19.50 seconds.

Sable rewrote the previous Asian Games record of 8:22.79 held in the name of Iran's Hossein Keyhani set at the 2018 Jakarta Games.

Sudha Singh had won a gold in women's 3000m steeplechase in the 2010 Asian Games in Guangzhou.

Toor, the 2018 Jakarta Asian Games gold medalist, came up with a mighty throw of 20.36 metres on his sixth and last attempt to overhaul his Saudi rival Mohamed Daouda Tolo's distance of 20.18 metres.

Toor, however, could not break his own Asian Games record of 20.75m set in 2018 Jakarta. But the 28-year-old's final throw was way too good for his Saudi rival to overhaul in his final attempt.

In the 1500m for women, India's Harmilan Bains won a



silver while Ajay Kumar Saroj and Jinson Johnson won silver and bronze respectively in the men's 1500m.

Earlier, the toast of the nation in the last edition, Indian heptathlete Swapna Barman's one "last shot" at

glory at the Asian Games turned into a nightmare as she struggled with injuries to virtually go out of medal reckoning after the javelin throw event.

The defending champion, who boasts of a personal best

of 52.55m in javelin throw, managed a throw of just 45.13 in the penultimate event of the gruelling two-day competition.

Javelin throw was one of the two events Swapna had won in 2018 en route to

becoming the first Indian heptathlete to win an Asian Games gold.

Overall, Swapna was ranked fourth with 4840 points, 11 points behind her nearest rival Jingyi Liu of China ahead of the 800m

India floored by China in basketball; qualify for quarterfinal

PTI ■ HANGZHOU (CHINA)

The Indian women made it to the quarterfinal despite being pummeled by China in their 5x5 basketball final group-stage match in the ongoing Asian Games here on Sunday.

Indian team suffered a crushing 53-111 defeat, which was its maiden loss in the sport this term, having won the previous two matches versus Indonesia (66-46) and Mongolia (68-62).

The quarterfinal qual-

ification in the sport is earned by the combined ranking of the teams in the tournament post-completion of the group stage, i.e. The top eight-ranked sides, where the Indians are currently ranked sixth.

It is India's fifth appearance in the competition in this sport, having finished ninth in the previous edition in Jakarta-Palembang 2018, whereas its best performance came in its first appearance in New Delhi 1982, finishing fifth.

race, which is the last segment of the seven-event competition.

The other Indian in the fray, Nandini Agasara notched a personal best of 39.88m in javelin throw that took her overall ranking to fifth place.

Earlier in the day, Swapna Barman leapt 5.71m in the long jump, while Nandini Agasara had a season-best

5.94m jump.

With her career ravaged by a spinal injury, the six-toed Indian athlete had contemplated retirement last year. But she took one last shot at glory and came to Hangzhou in her title defence bid.

This year she won the Inter-State meet and also bagged a silver medal in the build-up to the Asian Games. She also avoided surgery so as

to ensure that she does not miss her training despite a bad back.

"But her body condition could not cope up and she failed to get a good start," her coach Subhash Sarkar told PTI.

"She was expecting a good result in high jump but a fourth place finish shattered her and she couldn't recover from there," he added.

Swapna had a jump of 1.70m, which was nowhere close to her personal best of 1.87. "The poor start has affected her morale and it showed in today's javelin throw event. It's as good as over," Sarkar said of Swapna's prospects this time.

Earlier, India's Amlan Borgohain finished at the third position after clocking 21.08 seconds in the men's 200m heats and advanced to the semifinal.

The first three athletes in each heat make the cut for the semi-finals. The top four times from all the heats who have not made the cut will also advance to the semifinals.

The sprinter from Assam, currently the country's fastest, holds both the men's 100m and 200m national records.

However, Jyothi Yarraji failed to make the cut for the women's 200m final. The Indian had a timing of 23.78s.

Yarraji, however, is in contention for a medal in women's 100m hurdles.

India sign off with first-ever team silver after losing to China

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

Injured HS Prannoy's absence hurt India as they went down fighting 2-3 against badminton powerhouse China to sign off with their first-ever silver medal in the men's team championships at the Asian Games here on Sunday.

After world No. 7 Prannoy was ruled out due to a back injury, Lakshya Sen produced a gutsy show in the first singles and doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty then bossed over their opponents to put India 2-0 ahead.

So, it was once again left to Kidambi Srikanth to carry the team on his shoulders. The former world No. 1, who had produced a gritty show against South Korea in the semifinals, couldn't go the distance this time despite a healthy lead and multiple game points as China fought back to make it 1-2.

The defending champions then won the remaining two matches to maintain their hegemony in the Asian Games. With Prannoy missing the summit clash, Sen was handed the responsibility of leading the Indian charge. Sen recovered from a mid-game



slump to erase a five-point deficit in the decider and put India ahead with a 22-20 14-21 21-18 win over world No. 6 Shi Yuqi in an 83-minute opening slugfest.

World No. 3 men's doubles pair of Satwik and Chirag then went on a smashing spree to outclass world No. 2 Liang Wei Keng and Wang Chang 21-15 21-18 in 55 minutes to extend the lead to 2-0.

Srikanth, however, squandered an 18-14 lead and multiple game points in the first game to go down 22-24 9-21 against All England champion Li Shifeng in the third singles to expose India's weakest link -- the second doubles and third singles matches.

Scratch pair of Dhruv Kapila and Sai Pratheek Krishna Prasad then lost 6-21 15-21 to world No. 8 Liu Yu Chen

and Ou Xuan Yi, while Prannoy's replacement Mithun Manjunath, ranked 53, went down 12-21 4-21 against world No. 20 Weng Hong Yang in the third singles as India finished second best. Despite the loss, it is a creditable performance from the Indian team as it sealed India's second silver medal in badminton at the continental championships with two-time Olympic medalist PV Sindhu winning the first in women's singles in the 2018 edition.

The last time the Indian men won a badminton medal in the team championships was at the 1986 edition in Seoul where Sen's mentors Prakash Padukone and Vimal Kumar played a crucial role.

India now has 11 badminton medals in the Asian Games, including three individual singles medals, one silver and three bronze in the men's team, two women's team bronze and one medal each in men's doubles and mixed doubles.

Up against Shi Yuqi, Sen dictated the pace of the rallies to lead 11-6 at the interval. The duo played some exciting rallies with Sen keeping the pressure on his Chinese rival with his resolute defence to lead 15-10.

Nikhat signs off with bronze

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

Two-time world champion Nikhat Zareen's long winning streak came to an end as she signed off with a bronze medal while Parveen Hooda grabbed a Paris Olympic quota at the Asian Games here on Sunday.

Competing in the women's 50kg category, Zareen lost a fiercely contested 50kg semifinal battle 2-3 to two-time world championships medalist Raksat Chuthamat of Thailand.

Parveen, who won the bronze medal in the 63kg at the 2022 World Boxing Championships, moved past Uzbekistan's Sitora Turdibekova by unanimous verdict to move the 57kg semifinal and confirm India a medal.

The in-form Zareen, who has dropped down from her preferred 52kg weight class as it doesn't feature in the Paris Olympic, hasn't lost a bout since October's National Championships in 2021. She had even out-punched Chuthamat at the world championships earlier this year.

But on Sunday, Chuthamat



came well prepared for the Indian pugilist, who has stamped her authority in the international arena.

After losing the first round on three cards, the Thai boxer cramped Zareen and resorted to clinching every time the Indian tried to mount an attack.

Zareen has enjoyed an incredible run in the past couple of years, winning the prestigious Strandja Memorial boxing tournament, two world championships and the Commonwealth Games.

She returns home with not only a bronze but also an

Olympic quota.

Parveen and wins quota, Jaismine crashes out.

Parveen, the reigning Asian champion was in her elements from the word go, using her long arms to throw punches from a distance and control the proceedings.

She switched between the left jab and the right cross to unnerve the 21-year-old Uzbek. Parveen fought a strategic bout as after going on the offensive in the opening round, she waited for Turdibekova to come forward, only to pummel her with accurate scoring punches.

Slow bowling issue but can't rule them out

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Never judge a book by its cover and rule out an Australian cricket team from title contention at your own peril, are the two old concrete jungle sayings.

The five-time ICC ODI World Cup champions, at least on paper, can't be rated ahead of India and England during this edition of the tournament.

But the quality of this team is such that one won't be surprised if it pulls a rabbit out of the hat at some point in time during the tournament.

Australia begin their campaign against India in Chennai

on October 8.

Here's the SWOT Analysis

STRENGTH
The strength of this Australian team is certainly its batting, which does have a lot of depth with capable hitters right down till No. 9 in the line-up. David Warner is no doubt playing his last ODI tournament and has been in ominous form during the pre-cursor against India.

The maverick southpaw would like one final hurrah and a second 50-over silverware in his cabinet before calling time on his illustrious career. Travis Head's injury has given Mitchell Marsh a chance to

open and the big all-rounder has taken to the role like fish to water. Steve Smith, Cameron Green, Glenn Maxwell and Marcus Stoinis are all big hitters and good players of spin bowling, which is an advantage.

WEAKNESS

The real weakness of this side is the spin bowling department which only has one specialist spinner Adam Zampa. Missing Ashton Agar's restrictive wicket to wicket bowling in sub-continental conditions is going to affect them on tracks where there would be some turn on offer and the odd ball will be gripping off the surface.

Maxwell's part-time off-



spin is likely to come in handy as it was evident in Rajkot during the third ODI last week. But expecting 10 overs on most days from Maxwell will be a bit too much and Zampa's form

since the tour of South Africa has tapered off a bit. He has been pretty expensive in the past few games.

OPPORTUNITIES
The number of all-

rounders in the Aussie ranks gives them the chance to create opportunities like no other team. Green, Stoinis, Maxwell, Marsh (if he bowls) give the team a multi-dimensional look and there remains a lot of cover in case one of them has an off-day. Not to forget when Travis Head gets fit, he can also bowl some part-time spin. Also the experienced skipper Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood is possibly on par with Pakistan and India if not better.

Left-arm Starc could be inconsistent but the day he gets deliveries to dart in, most top batters find him unplayable.

including the form of premier spinner Shadab who did not bowl in the warm-up but had a forgettable Asia Cup.

The next warm-up game is against Australia on October 3.

His form is key for Pakistan in the middle-overs and the 24-year-old had no qualms in admitting that he did not have the best of times in Asia Cup where four of his six wickets came against Nepal and he ended with an average of 40.83.

India, South Korea play out 1-1 draw in women's hockey

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

The Indian women's hockey team was held to a 1-1 draw by South Korea but the Savita Punia-led unbeaten side still continued to lead its pool in the Asian Games here on Sunday.

Navneet Kaur (44th min) scored the equaliser for the higher-ranked India after Cho Hyejin (12th) had put South Korea ahead at the Gongshu Canal Sports Park Stadium.

Thanks to the draw, the Indian team, currently ranked sixth in the world, held onto the top spot in Pool A by goal difference over 12-ranked Korea. The top two teams from each pool will qualify for the semi-finals.

India crushed Singapore 13-0 in the opener before notching a 6-0 win over Malaysia.

Both teams looked to score from the word go but the Koreans had the first opportunity of the match when Cho Hyejin shot at the goal. However, Deep Grace Ekka effected a fine save to keep India from going behind.

The Koreans, though, took



the lead minutes later as Cho Hyejin scored off a penalty stroke after she was fouled by Udita inside the circle.

The first quarter ended with Korea 1-0 ahead with the Indians lacking the finishing skills upfront.

Desperate to find the equaliser, India earned a few penalty corners but none of them resulted in a goal as the first half ended with South Korea leading by a goal.

The third quarter also went along similar lines until Navneet found the back of the net off a penalty corner.

The two teams tried hard to take the lead in the fourth and final quarter but their efforts did not translate into goals, as they shared honours.

India failed to convert a penalty corner towards the end and they also had a player-advantage at that stage of the game.

Floored by Rohit's talent, fascinated by Singham: Shadab

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Tackling a marauder like Rohit Sharma is right at the top of leg-spinner Shadab Khan's check-list but when the Indian skipper doesn't occupy his mind-space, the Pakistan vice-captain doesn't shy away from expressing his love for Bollywood movies and local food.

Ajay Devgn would have little clue about how big an impression he had made on

Shadab.

Glancing at the top cop from Hyderabad police manning the media conference room, the leg-spinner couldn't help saying: "Singham bhai aaye hain yaha pe. (I see Singham is also present here)."

The reference of super-hit Bollywood cop movie wasn't lost on anyone as Shadab spoke with a lot of warmth about how the 'City of Nizams' have received their cricket team with open arms.

"The welcome was fantastic at the (Hyderabad) airport and also a lot of people have been thronging the team hotel and hospitality wise it's been really good," Shadab told media-persons during the first official media conference organised by the team.

Hyderabad food is meant to tickle everyone's taste buds and Shadab is no different.

"The food has been really tasty and the support staff (all South Africans) are worried

that we end up increasing our fat percentage (laughs). Hope, we get the same love in Ahmedabad where we play India (laughs)," said Shadab referring to his team's much-awaited clash against the arch-rivals on October 14.

As the discussion turned towards cricket, the reverence for Rohit was there to be seen. He also picked up Kuldeep Yadav as the most dangerous Indian bowler.

"I admire Rohit Sharma a

lot and among the leading batsmen in the world he is the most difficult to bowl to. Once he gets set he becomes very dangerous. Among the bowlers, since I am a leg-spinner, it will be Kuldeep Yadav given his recent form," said Shadab.

"We have learnt from our Asia Cup mistakes"

Pakistan failed to defend 346 against the New Zealand and have plenty to think about in the bowling department

including the form of premier spinner Shadab who did not bowl in the warm-up but had a forgettable Asia Cup.

The next warm-up game is against Australia on October 3.

His form is key for Pakistan in the middle-overs and the 24-year-old had no qualms in admitting that he did not have the best of times in Asia Cup where four of his six wickets came against Nepal and he ended with an average of 40.83.