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AS BIDEN SIGNS FUNDING

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GST MOP-UP RISES  
IN SEPTEMBER

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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 amidst applause from Indian-Americans.

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

the initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"He said so many things so tellingly. But at the end of the day, if we ask ourselves what was the message, the message at the end of the day was about doing the right thing, about doing the decent thing, and about leaving no one behind," he said. "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 peo-



ple", he added. Azad observed some people were trying to give the impression that he is looking for rehabilitation.

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

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

"There were some political mistakes over many years which have pushed the State backwards, instead of going forward. In the last nine years, another great mistake was made — Article 370 and Article 35A were removed.

"Article 35A, subsequently Article 35B, was not promulgated after Independence. It

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

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

Several former Congress leaders joined his bandwagon after quitting the Congress party.

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

# INDIA CROSSES 53



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 off 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 sabres 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 Sujay 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.





# Modi leads nation in hour-long 'shramdaan'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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



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

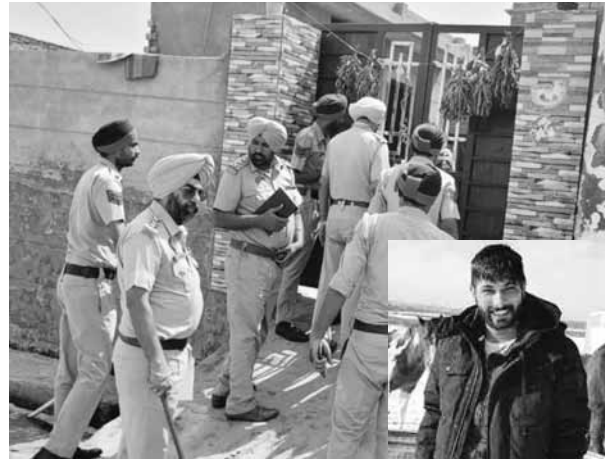
Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari took volunteered for a cleanliness activity in New Delhi. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi said it held cleanliness drives at 500 locations across the national capital. Cricketers such as Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma also appealed to the people to come together for "Ek Tareekh,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

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

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

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

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



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

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

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

## Rajnath takes part in cleanliness drive



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

## India needs stronger Armed forces, says Minister

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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



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

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

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

## Modi to visit Rajasthan, MP to launch development projects

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch multiple development projects in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh during his visit to the two poll-bound States on Monday. The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said he will launch and lay the foundation stone for development projects worth about Rs 7,000 crore in Rajasthan and around Rs 19,260 crore in Madhya Pradesh. During his visit to Chittorgarh in Rajasthan, he will inaugurate the Mehana-Bathinda-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 Sheopor districts. These projects will together benefit more than 720 villages in the region. He will also lay the foundation stone of nine health centres under the Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission and inaugurate and launch several other projects. Assembly polls in both Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan are expected to be held in November-December.

## Awareness programme on 'menstrual health' held



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

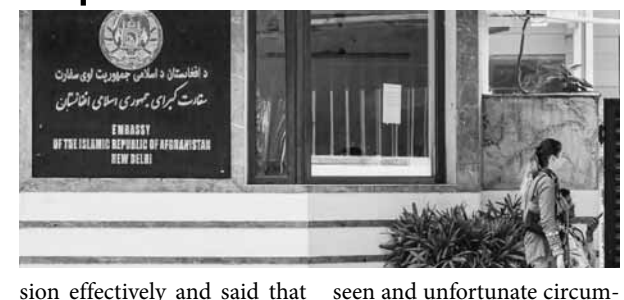
Joining the Government's initiative on menstrual hygiene to promote women's health, 'Menstrual Health- One more step towards women's health', the Army Hospital (R&R) Delhi Cantonment here organised a menstrual health awareness programme 'Mahawari mein Swachhta' on Sunday. A lecture cum demonstration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

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

## Afghan Embassy in Delhi announces shut down of operations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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



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

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





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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Resilient

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

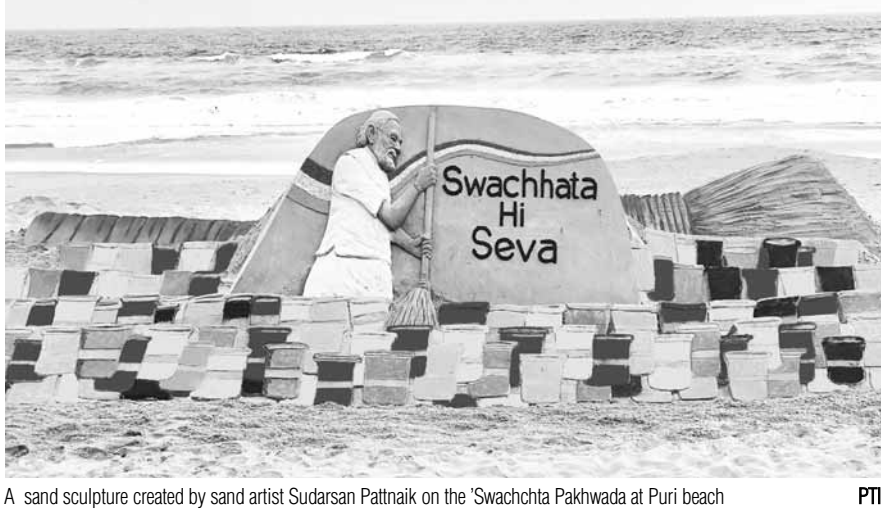
**A**mid the diplomatic brouhaha following the killing of India-branded terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Canada, India has embarked on a determined and nuanced offensive to present its side of the story on the global fora. During an interaction with Indian journalists in Washington DC, External Affairs 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



RAJDEEP PATHAK

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### TROUBLE OVER POETRY

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

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

Haridasan Rajan | Kozhikode

### RBI EXTENDS DEADLINE FOR 2K NOTES

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

### 'Annadata' Dr Swami Nathan is no more



**T**he 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 re-evaluate 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



BIJU DHARMAPALAN

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

**T**ourism 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 emphasis-

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

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

This can involve initiatives that aim to minimize negative environmental impacts, conserve natural resources, and promote sustainable development. Tourism and biodiversity conservation are closely linked, and when managed responsibly, tourism can play a significant role in the protection and preservation of natural ecosystems and biodiversity. For this, we have to

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

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

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

## FIRST COLUMN

## MAGIC OF MUDRA PRANAYAMA

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



RAVI VALLURI

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

## The yogic science of mudras

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

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



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

## (a) Jnana mudra

This is performed to increase brain power, improve memory and for the removal of negative thoughts. Thereby one attains peace and bliss.

## (b) Prithvi mudra

This helps in balancing the five sense organs, improves blood circulation and enhances our energy levels. Practising this mudra assists in increasing our alertness.

## (c) Apana mudra

This facilitates an improved elimination process, revitalizing the digestive system, improving the gums and strengthening immunity.

## (d) Prana mudra

This mudra addresses the problem of fatigue; it provides essential vitamins to the body besides increasing stamina and vigour. It also helps in maintaining the health of our eyes.

## (e) Dhyana mudra

Essentially, this mudra helps in making us mindful and wakeful. Over a period, we attain peace of mind.

## (f) Shunya Vayu mudra

The practice of this mudra helps in combating problems of flatulence and gastric ailments. The gut houses our solar plexus, which is also referred to as the second brain. We need to take adequate care of our abdomen as most human ailments arise from this part of the body. Thus, there is enormous merit and wisdom in the adage, that your health is in your hands.

(Ravi Valluri is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. and is a faculty of the Art of Living; views expressed are personal)

## India's space Odyssey: To Moon and beyond



UTTAM CHAKRABORTY

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

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

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

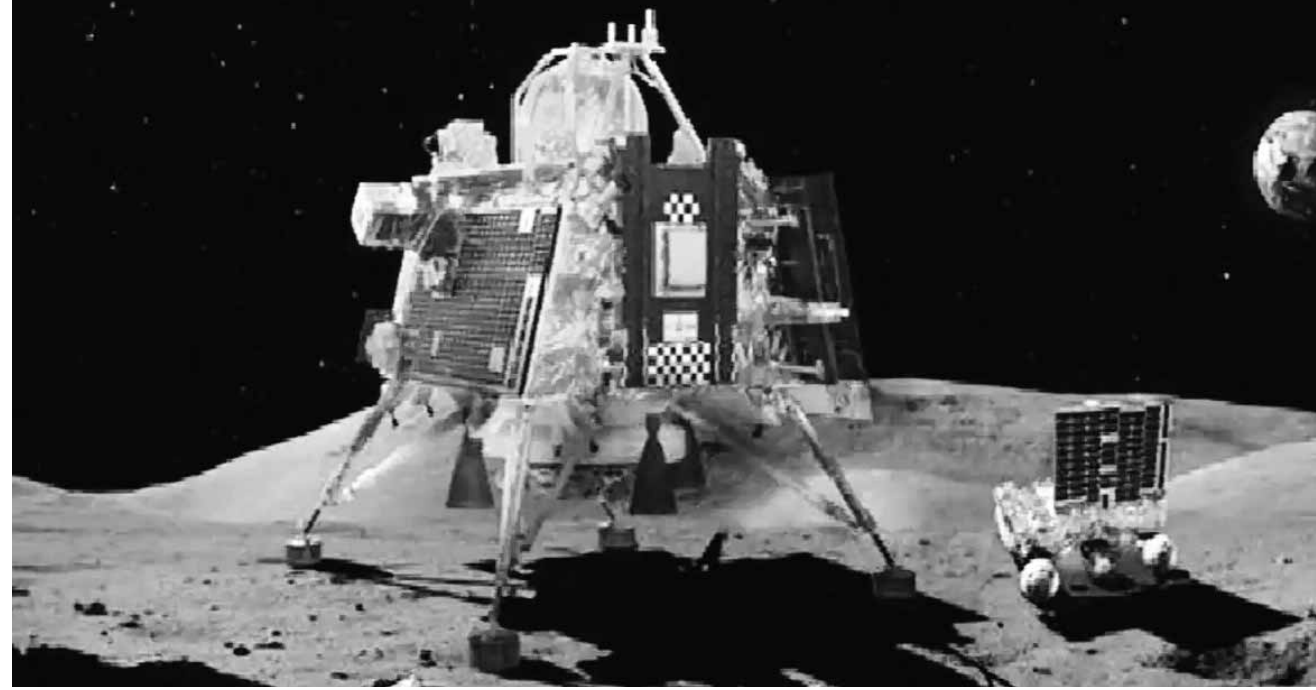
## SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS

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

## SPACE VOYAGE &amp; 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



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.



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)

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

the urgent need to address the issue.

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

Unfortunately, public health developments during recent years have adversely impacted the mental health of elderly and the children alike. It becomes important to make children understand that sound mental health is vital to their emotional development. It is evident from the studies that since the COVID-19 pandemic

began, more children are reporting higher levels of anxiety and depression than ever before. That makes now the perfect time to break down the stigma connected with mental illness by openly discussing the issue.

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









# Alcaraz, Sabalenka sail through at China Open

AFP ■ BEIJING

Top seeds Carlos Alcaraz and Aryna Sabalenka both breezed into the next round of the China Open with routine victories on Sunday.

Alcaraz sealed a place in the men's quarter-finals with a smooth 6-2, 6-2 victory over Italy's Lorenzo Musetti in Beijing.

The world number two overpowered his opponent and seized the first set when Musetti whacked a baseline backhand into the net.

The Spaniard then broke serve twice in the second set and saw out a comfortable match with an unreturned serve.

He will next face Casper Ruud after the world number nine came back to beat Argentina's Tomas Etcheverry 1-6, 7-5, 7-6 (9-7).

"I feel great, honestly. It was a good performance against a really tough opponent," Alcaraz said at a post-match press briefing.

"(My level) didn't (go) up and down. I stayed at a high level, high quality, during the whole match," the 20-year-old said.

A sticking point in the tournament's early rounds has been the match balls, which Alcaraz's main challenger Daniil

Medvedev described on Saturday as "like a grapefruit".

Alcaraz said Sunday he had also felt the distinct quality of the balls -- allegedly quick to fluff up -- "since day one".

"It's something tough, but tennis players have to get used to the balls in every tournament," he said in response to a question from AFP.

"Here, in just one or two games, the balls become really different from (when they're) new. It's a kind of different (style of) play," he said.

Also on Sunday, world number seven Jannik Sinner obliterated Japan's Yoshihito Nishioka 6-2, 6-0.

The Italian will play a quarter-final against either fourth-ranked Holger Rune or Bulgaria's Grigor Dimitrov, who play each other on Sunday evening.

**SUPER SABALENKA**

Earlier, world number one Aryna Sabalenka sailed into the second round of the women's draw with an imperious 6-1, 6-2 defeat of American Sofia Kenin.

The Belarusian pummelled Kenin with a succession of mighty serves and groundstrokes and wrapped up the opening set with an ace after just 23 minutes.



The 25-year-old broke serve twice more in the second set as Kenin -- playing with heavy strapping on her left thigh -- failed to muster a response.

Sabalenka sealed the match with yet another unreturned serve to set up a tie against either Magdalena Frech or Katie Boulter in the next round.

"Honestly, I didn't expect to play that good on my serve -- in practice, it didn't work very well," Sabalenka said at a post-match briefing.

"But I was super hyped that I was able to bring that level on my serve today. I think it helped a lot," she said.

"I think that was the key of today's match."

The China Open is taking place for the first time since 2019 after Beijing ended its isolationist zero-Covid policies.

All of the eight top-ranked men are taking part except tennis legend Novak Djokovic, while all of the women's top eight are in action.

The women's tournament is also the first since its global governing body ended a boycott of China this year.

The embargo had been declared after Chinese player Peng Shuai made sexual assault accusations against a top government official.



## Jerome Boateng trains with Bayern Munich

AFP ■ MUNICH (GERMANY)

Germany defender Jerome Boateng trained with Bayern Munich on Sunday, amid reports the centre-back may be set to make a return to the Bundesliga champions.

The club wrote on its website that Boateng was "among those involved" in Sunday's session, adding the defender "will continue to train over the coming days".

Free since the expiry of his contract with Lyon in June, Boateng, 35, could serve as a backup solution for Bayern coach Thomas Tuchel.

Bayern currently have only three recognised central defenders -- Dayot Upamecano, Kim Min-Jae and Matthijs de Ligt -- with the latter having missed his side's 2-

2 draw with RB Leipzig on Saturday due to injury.

Tuchel was also forced to play midfielder Leon Goretzka and wing-back Noussair Mazraoui in central defence in Bayern's Cup tie against Muenster on Tuesday, which the German champions won 4-0.

Boateng played for Bayern from 2011 to 2021, winning the 2013 and 2020 Champions League titles, as well as the 2014 World Cup with Germany.

Boateng is also currently undergoing a continuing court procedure in Bavaria for domestic violence.

A German court last month threw out the assault conviction against Boateng for attacking his ex-girlfriend in 2018 and ordered a new trial.

## PSG players apologise for anti-Marseille chants

AFP ■ PARIS

Four Paris Saint-Germain players on Sunday apologised for offensive chants aimed at rivals Marseille after a Ligue 1 game, saying they "sincerely regretted" their words.

French internationals Ousmane Dembele, Randal Kolo Muani, and Layvin Kurzawa and Moroccan Achraf Hakimi were filmed singing an



insulting song towards Marseille fans after a 4-0 victory at the Parc des Princes on September 24.

"We let ourselves get carried away by the euphoria and we sincerely regret the words we should not have said and would like to apologise," the four said in identical posts on social media.

"We are well aware of the impact of our actions and our words on the public, notably the youngest who

dream watching a football match," they continued, adding "in the future, we will do everything to further respect our duty to set an example".

Homophobic chants were also sung during this match by Parisian supporters for several minutes.

The club and its four players will appear before the French football league's disciplinary committee next Thursday, the day after PSG's Champions League trip to Newcastle.

## Kudermetova beats Pegula to win Pan Pacific Open



AFP ■ TOKYO

Russia's Veronika Kudermetova won the Pan Pacific Open in Tokyo on Sunday, upsetting tennis world number four Jessica Pegula in straight sets.

The 19th-ranked Kudermetova overwhelmed the American 7-5, 6-1 in an hour and 24 minutes.

"I knew it would be a tough final... I need to fight for every ball and today it worked really well," she said.

"I'm really happy that I managed to win my second title," said the 26-year-old, who won her first WTA singles title

in Charleston in 2021.

She beat Pegula in three sets on the clay in Madrid this year.

"I played better today than in Madrid," Kudermetova said, adding that Pegula "always fights and plays solidly every match".

"Today I followed my game and my plan" to play aggressively, she said.

Kudermetova had a tough semi-final, needing three hours and 25 minutes to defeat Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova.

She stunned four-time Grand Slam champion Iga Swiatek in the quarters.

Pegula was aiming for her

second title of the season following victory last month in Montreal.

Kudermetova "put a lot of pressure on me at the beginning so it made it very tough", the American said.

"Luckily I was able to get back to the first set but I just don't think I was serving well enough... She was a better player today."

The 29-year-old went into the US Open dreaming of a first ever Grand Slam title, but her campaign came to an abrupt halt as compatriot and close friend Madison Keys recorded a dominant win in just 61 minutes.



## VAR officials stood down after Liverpool goal error

AFP ■ LONDON

The match officials at fault for a botched VAR call that cost Liverpool a goal in their 2-1 defeat at Tottenham on Saturday have been removed from duty for the rest of the Premier League weekend.

Referees' body the PGMOL admitted a "significant human error" had meant Luis Diaz's strike, when the game was level at 0-0, was not awarded by a VAR review after being flagged offside.

VAR official Darren

England was due to be fourth official at Sunday's Premier League match between Nottingham Forest and Brentford.

And his assistant VAR Dan Cook was to be assistant referee for Monday's west London derby between Fulham and Chelsea.

Spurs struck in the 96th minute through Joel Matip's own goal to edge a highly controversial encounter.

Liverpool were reduced to nine men as Curtis Jones and Diogo Jota were sent-off either

side of half-time.

"I never saw a game like this with the most unfair circumstances, crazy decisions," said Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp.

PGMOL chief Howard Webb apologised to the Reds after the match for the error that ruled out Diaz's strike.

"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.

