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INDIA'S SEVEN PER CENT GROWTH FAILS TO GENERATE JOBS: RAGHURAM RAJAN

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12 SPORTS

WEST ASIA ON FIRE



People check the site of the assassination of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah in Beirut's southern suburbs, Sunday AP/PTI

PTI ■ JERUSALEM/ BEIRUT

The Israeli military said Sunday that it killed another high-ranking Hezbollah official in an airstrike as the Lebanese militant group was reeling from a string of devastating blows and the killing of its overall leader, Hassan Nasrallah. The military said Nabil Kaouk, the deputy head of Hezbollah's Central Council, was killed on Saturday. There was no immediate comment from Hezbollah, and it was not known where the strike took place. Hezbollah has confirmed that one of its

senior commanders, Ali Karaki, died in the Israeli airstrike that killed its top leader Hassan Nasrallah on Friday. Israel has killed several top commanders in the Lebanese militant group in recent weeks in a series of strikes. The Israeli military said it carried out another targeted strike on Beirut later on Sunday. In Syria, 37 militants affiliated to the extremist Islamic State group and an al-Qaeda-linked group were killed in two strikes, the United States military said Sunday. Two of the dead were senior militants, it said.

Hezbollah has also been targeted by a sophisticated attack on its pagers and walkie-talkies that was widely blamed on Israel. A wave of Israeli airstrikes across large parts of Lebanon has killed at least 1,030 people - including 156 women and 87 children - in less than two weeks, according to Lebanon's Health Ministry. Hundreds of thousands of people have been driven from their homes in Lebanon by the latest strikes. The Government estimates that around 2,50,000 are in shelters, with three to four times as many staying with

friends or relatives, or camping out on the streets, Environment Minister Nasser Yassin told The Associated Press. Hezbollah has continued to fire rockets and missiles into northern Israel, but most have been intercepted or fallen in open areas. No Israelis have been killed since the latest wave of strikes on top Hezbollah leaders began on Sept. 20. Kaouk was a veteran member of Hezbollah going back to the 1980s and served as Hezbollah's military commander in southern Lebanon during the 2006 war with Israel. He often appeared in local media, where he would comment on politics and security developments, and he gave eulogies at the funerals of senior militants. The United States had announced sanctions against him in 2020. Hezbollah began firing rockets, missiles and drones into northern Israel after Hamas' October 7 attack out of Gaza triggered the war there. Hezbollah and Hamas are allies that consider themselves part of an Iran-backed 'Axis of Resistance' against Israel. Israel has responded with waves of airstrikes, and the conflict has steadily ratcheted up to the brink of all-out war, raising fears of a region-wide conflagration.

Kashmir reacts, India bleeds

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The situation remained volatile in several parts of Kashmir after sporadic protests broke out over the killing of Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah in an Israeli air strike in Lebanon. People took to the streets in Srinagar and Budgam to condemn Nasrallah's death, chanting anti-Israel and anti-US slogans. Political leaders Mehbooba Mufti, National Conference Member Parliament from Srinagar Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi and Shia leader and former cabinet Minister Imran Reza Ansari also suspended election campaigns to condole the killing. The gesture, however, triggered sharp reactions.

Abdullah condemned the actions of Israel and called for world support to end the ongoing massacre of innocent people in Gaza and Lebanon. Another Shia leader and former Minister Imran Reza Ansari labelled him as a 'Lion'. Ansari posted a message on X, "A lion has fallen, his roar remains. In every heartbeat his struggle sustains. I am suspending all campaigning activities to honour the supreme sacrifice made by Shaheed Sayed Hassan Nasrallah". Meanwhile, the security forces deployed on ground zero have been asked to exercise utmost restraint to prevent any flare-up ahead of the third and final round of polling on October 1. Labelling her as "pro-militant", BJP national spokesperson RP Singh said, "By cancelling her campaigning, she has shown she is shedding tears over the death of terrorists. It is her habit to call terrorists martyrs. She had similarly wept for Burhan Wani some time back". However, she is not alone in expressing solidarity with terrorists, he said. "Sonja Gandhi too shed tears for the terrorists killed in Batla House. All leaders of the INDIA alliance do this for vote bank politics. For them, the country doesn't come first. She is doing this for the vote bank," he charged. Former deputy Chief Minister and senior BJP leader Kavinder Gupta also condemned Mehbooba's stance, asking, "What problem does Mehbooba Mufti have with the death of terrorist Nasrallah? When Hindus are killed in Bangladesh and Pakistan, there is a grave silence from them."



A braveheart of Jammu and Kashmir police, Head Constable Bashir Ahmad, who sacrificed his life in the line of duty after neutralising a Pakistani terrorist in the Billawar tehsil of Kathua district

Terror in Jammu, one personnel killed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

A braveheart of Jammu and Kashmir Apolice, Head Constable Bashir Ahmad, who sacrificed his life in the line of duty after neutralising a Pakistani terrorist in the Billawar tehsil of Kathua district late Saturday evening, was eagerly waiting to come home to finalise the marriage arrangements of his elder daughter and son. On Sunday his mortal remains, draped in the tricolor, reached home after a formal wreath-laying ceremony at the police lines. A large number of close relatives and family friends were assembled at their residence to pay their last tributes to him. Only recently the family had finalised the marriage proposal of their elder daughter. Before returning to his duty, Bashir had promised his elder brother to firm up the marriage proposal of his son before decide the dates. "My brother wanted to throw a big party after finalising the marriage proposals of his daughter and son", Barkat Ali, elder brother of the martyred head constable, told The Pioneer at his residence in Channi Himmat.

Continued on page 8

Shocking road rage in Delhi NCR, two dead

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 30-year-old Delhi Police constable was crushed to death in a road rage incident late Saturday night in the Nangloi area after asking a driver to move his car in the national capital. The constable was reportedly dragged for 10 metres before being hit by another vehicle. The incident occurred when the constable was monitoring the area due to a rise in burglaries, dressed in civilian clothes. In another shocking display of road rage, a dozen men engaged in a violent brawl on a busy road in Ghaziabad, after one of the vehicles they were travelling in began driving on the wrong side of traffic on Saturday. The incident, captured on video and shared widely on social media, unfolded as two groups clashed over a vehicle driving on the wrong side of the traffic. According to police, the deceased constable, identified as Sandeep, joined the force in 2018 and was posted at the



A damaged car that was involved in an accident, outside Nangloi police station, in New Delhi, Sunday Ranjan Dimri/Pioneer

Nangloi police station. He is survived by his mother, wife, and a five-year-old son. The incident occurred around 2.15 am near Veena Enclave when Sandeep was going towards Railway Road from Nangloi Police station during duty hours dressed in civilian clothes. Upon noticing a car being driven recklessly, Sandeep told the driver not to do so, the Delhi Police said in a statement. He was on his bike when a WagonR car tried to overtake him. Suddenly, the vehicle increased its speed and hit the constable's

motorcycle from behind and dragged him for about 10 metres before hitting another car, it said. CCTV footage revealed that Sandeep had taken a left turn into a narrow lane and indicated the Wagon R to slow down when the vehicle suddenly sped up and hit his bike. The impact caused Sandeep to be dragged along with his bike for about 10 meters before the Wagon R hit a parked car. The cop is seen gesturing to the car driver to slow down. But the car picks up speed and hits him.

Continued on page 8

Intense rain claims 125 lives in Nepal, jeopardise Bihar

PTI/PNS ■ KATHMANDU/PATNA

The death toll from rain-triggered floodings and landslides across Nepal climbed to 125 on Sunday, police said. Large swathes of eastern and central Nepal have been inundated since Friday, with flash floods reported in parts of the country. Due to the prevailing situation the border districts of neighbouring Bihar remained vulnerable as the State Government sounded an alert for floods in northern, southern and central parts of the State following heavy discharge of water from Birpur and Valmikinagar barrages on Sunday. The embankment of the Bagmati River in Madhkaul village in Sitamarhi district broke on Sunday, which is being repaired, they said. Due to heavy discharge of water from Birpur barrage, seepage was also reported from the Kosi Eastern embankment near Gopalpur on Saturday night, which was repaired by the engineers of the Water Resources Department (WRD). A low-pressure system in the Bay of Bengal and the more northerly than usual position of the monsoon trough is the reason behind exceptionally intense rain. Scientists say that while climate change is



changing the amount and timing of rainfall across Asia, a key reason for the rise in the impact of floods is the built environment, including unplanned construction, especially on floodplains, which leaves insufficient areas for water retention and drainage. A total of 6.61 lakh cusecs of water was released from Birpur barrage on Kosi river till 5 am, the highest in 56 years. According to the latest bulletin by the State Water Resources department, the last time the maximum water discharged from this barrage was 7.88 lakh cusecs of water in 1968.

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Chandrayaan-3 lands at Shiv Shakti Point



Chandrayaan-3 landed on possibly oldest craters of Moon, say researchers File Photo

Iconic trams of Kolkata to chug away into history

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Poet Laureate Rabindranath Tagore once called tram a "link between life and literature" even as he described in his Sahaj Paath how "the roads of Kolkata have become like a snake on which the Tram hurtles" down. Tram was also a central topic in poet Jibanananda Das's iconic work, Banalata Sen. Ironically he died in a tram accident in 1954. Decades later a famous modern Bengali writer likened the iconic Tram of Kolkata with a pre-historic reptile even as he called it a "Prak Oitihashik Sorisreep". No more these literatures: As the Bengal Government has decided to derail the space guzzling vehicle -- arguably the only surviving environment-friendly transport service of Kolkata, nay the entire country. Dwelling on the issue Bengal Transport Minister Snehasis

Chakrabarty said that the Government had decided to discontinue the tram services as it was not only slow but also consumed huge space. "Trams are the part of Kolkata's heritage ever since it started its journey in 1873, but one has also to consider the operational costs, its low speed and not lest the space it consumes" all considering the fact that unlike Delhi or Mumbai which have more than 20 per cent of their surface areas comprising roads Kolkata has only six per cent. "This leads to congestion of traffic particularly in North Kolkata. To ensure that people don't get late to office during peak hours due to traffic jams, these difficult measures are taken," he justified. The Minister however hurriedly supplied two rejoinders: First a short (3 km) route -- from Esplanade to Maidan -- however will be allowed to survive for heritage purpose and tourism and



FILE PHOTO

second "a date has not been fixed as we are not going to end it today or tomorrow." He said the decision was in contemplation for quite some time (years) when several tram routes in North Kolkata were phased out without notice fearing public backlash. Despite the idea being in

contemplation of as early as the Left regime it was the TMC Government that set out to bell the cat and hastened up the speed of tram's withdrawal particularly after Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee told in one of her public speeches how tram tracks had become a nuisance on

thoroughfares like the Hazra Road that leads to her Kalighat residence making it risky for the bikers who "may any moment skid off their vehicles due to the tram lines." Kolkata was the first to get trams on February 24, 1873, with horse-drawn cars running on tracks. "A big horses' stable

was set up at Raja Bazaar off Sealdah to supply the horses for trams. Subsequently tram was modernised with steam power in 1882, whereas first electric-powered tram was introduced in 1900 a few years after Madras (presently Chennai) got its own electric tram. More recently AC trams were introduced in 2013. Trams ran in colonial towns like Mumbai, Delhi, Madras, Patna, Nashik too but they were discontinued with time and as more modern and faster modes of transport appeared but for Kolkata. The city clung on to its "heritage and cultural icon," for decades until the present Government decided to discontinue it. "We tried to restore tram to its former glory often by offering schemes like AC restaurants on tram as also proposing offers for 'wedding on trams' ... but nothing was taken seriously by the authorities as they had decided to discontinue it," a member of tram users

association said adding "at Rs 6 and 7 tram is perhaps the cheapest service in the city which this Government is trying to discontinue and which we will not let happen." "We have seen tram transform a from wooden to a steel carriage in the early 1980s, ... we loved tram so much and offered our service wholeheartedly but the Government should also have understood the importance of tram which is not only environment friendly but also cheap," said Nareesh Singh a 90-year-old former tram pilot. Such was the popularity of tram in 1960s and 70s that a mere one paisa increase in its fare led to a massive unrest in Kolkata that saw several trams being torched by the agitators, he said. Meanwhile the Calcutta High too has offered its suggestion while dealing a public interest litigation asking the State Government to explore a public-private partnership

mode to allow the vehicle of the past to survive. The PIL was filed in 2022 and is still continuing. In the PIL Sulagna Mukherjee, the petitioner pointed out that at time different cities of the world were increasingly embracing tram services for its "green" attributes the State Government is going to discontinue it. "We will go for a bigger movement and will not allow this Government to kill tram ... they are doing this in order to reclaim the sprawling lands housing tram depots on prime areas where the politicians will allow the builder lobby to make malls ... we will not let that happen ... rather we will even force them to reintroduce the double-decker buses which they have discontinued a decade ago," said Archishman Chatterjee a college student who was a part of a recent agitation at Shyambazar crossing.

Investment flourishes only in secure environment: CM

Inaugurates Varun Beverages unit in GIDA

PNS ■ GORAKHPUR



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on the occasion of the inauguration of soft drink bottling and dairy product plant established by Varun Beverages Limited in Gorakhpur on Sunday

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Sunday, said that investment flourishes only in a secure environment, and if people don't feel safe, their capital won't be either. He pointed out that the state's strong security environment and its zero tolerance policy towards crime have disturbed those who once saw crime as a profession. The chief minister was speaking at the inauguration of a new soft drink bottling and dairy product plant of Varun Beverages, a franchisee of PepsiCo, which has been set up with an investment of Rs 1,170 crore in Sector 27 of Gorakhpur Industrial Development Authority, near the Gorakhpur Link Expressway. He said, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called upon the youth to focus more on entrepreneurship instead of jobs. Entrepreneurship is the most important medium to get more opportunities for employment." The chief minister pointed out that developed countries have prioritised entrepreneurship, research and innovation. He added that investment creates crucial job opportunities for youth and helps fulfill the aspirations of the people. He also shared that in the past seven years, Uttar Pradesh has emerged as an excellent destination for investment, thanks to its improved security and law and order policies. "The government is dedicated to maintaining zero tolerance towards crime because ensuring safety now is essential for securing a better future," he said. The CM shared insights on his government's investment initiatives since assuming office for the first time in 2017. He recalled that a dedicated team was constituted to explore investment opportunities in Uttar Pradesh, and it initially projected that the state could attract ₹20,000 crore in investments but skeptics questioned it. Accepting this skepticism as a challenge, Chief Minister Yogi resolved to transform Uttar Pradesh into a desirable destination for both domestic and international investors. His administration's efforts resulted in attracting investment proposals totaling Rs 40 lakh crore during the Global Investors Summit held in February 2023. During the recent groundbreaking ceremony attended by Prime Minister Modi, the foundation for investment proposals worth Rs 10 lakh crore was laid. Chief Minister Yogi mentioned that another Rs 10

lakh crore in investment proposals are in the pipeline, ready to be implemented. The chief minister stated that increasing investment is a sign of rising industrial development and job creation in UP. Citing the Varun Beverages unit in GIDA as an example, he noted that the administration facilitated this progress by providing 48 acres of land for the project, resulting in employment for over 1,500 individuals. Notably, 90 per cent of these employees are from Uttar Pradesh, with more than 70 per cent hailing from Gorakhpur and its surrounding areas. "Previously, many young people were compelled to seek job opportunities in cities like Bengaluru, Mumbai, Kolkata, Hyderabad, or even abroad in places like Thailand and Singapore. Now, they can find jobs and employment opportunities closer to home. But, this change has not taken place overnight," Chief Minister Yogi stated. He pointed out that after the foundation stone of GIDA was laid, there were no signs of industrial development until 1998, largely due to protests and incidents like lathi-charges and firings that deterred investment. However, by addressing these challenges and improving communication with investors, Uttar Pradesh has successfully attracted Rs 12,000 crore in investments to GIDA over the past three to four years, he added. "Establishing a solid land bank, improving infrastructure, and ensuring ease of doing business are essential for bringing investment to the ground in Uttar Pradesh. The government has focused on these areas, creating digital platforms to streamline business processes," Yogi said. He pointed out that the Nivesh Mitra portal serves as a single-window system for over 450 No

Objection Certificates (NOCs) while investment memorandums of understanding are monitored through Nivesh Sarathi. An online incentive system is also in place for investors, and CM Fellows have been appointed to address any issues faced by them. The CM mentioned several companies, including IGL, Gallant, Ankur Udyog, Keyan Distillery, Gyan Dairy, and Tatva Plastic that have invested in GIDA. Additionally, work on a Plastic Park, Flatted Factory, and Readymade Garment Park is being pursued vigorously by GIDA, he added. He pointed out that a CBG plant has been established in Dhuriyapur marking a significant step toward green energy through the production of ethanol from agricultural stubble and efforts are also underway to transform Dhuriyapur into a major industrial area. Regarding Varun Beverages, Chief Minister Yogi acknowledged the company's excellent dairy products but pointed out the current challenge of insufficient local milk supply, requiring sourcing from outside the region. To address this, the government has approved ₹20 crore to establish a women's cooperative similar to the Balini Milk Producers in Bundelkhand. He urged immediate action to enable Varun Beverages to source milk from Gorakhpur, Basti and Azamgarh divisions, which will significantly increase farmers' income and support livestock. He also encouraged the management of Varun Beverages to invite progressive farmers to visit their plant. Describing UP as the best destination for investment, CM Yogi said, "The government is giving continuous encouragement to start-ups and industries along with jobs.

Youth are getting proper opportunities in every field. Six and a half lakh youth have been given government jobs in the state while two crore have secured employment in micro, small and medium enterprise industry and 60 lakh youth have been linked to self-employment." He highlighted the success of the One District One Product (ODOP) scheme, which has generated significant employment opportunities across the state. After inaugurating the Varun Beverages unit in GIDA, Chief Minister Yogi made a thorough inspection of the bottling plant. He observed the entire process from the manufacturing to packaging of carbonated soft drinks and explored various PepsiCo brand products. During his visit, Varun Beverages officials showcased their state-of-the-art high-tech machinery and the innovative bottling processes in place. On this occasion, UP's Industrial Development Minister Nand Gopal Gupta 'Nandi', MP Ravi Kishan Shukla, Nepal's Krishnanagar MP Abhishek Pratap Shah, Mayor Dr Manglesh Shrivastava, MLA Pradeep Shukla, Fateh Bahadur Singh, Vipin Singh, Mahendrapal Singh, Shriram Chauhan, Sarwan Nishad, MLC and Bharatiya Janata Party state Vice-President Dr Dharmendra Singh, MLC Bagish Pathak, Chief Secretary Manoj Kumar Singh, Medanta Group Chairman Dr Naresh Trehan, GIDA Chief Executive Officer Anuj Malik, BJP district president Yudhishthir Singh, M/s Varun Beverages Chairman Ravikant Jaipuria, Varun Beverages Executive Director Kamlesh Jain, and others were present.

CM reviews floods in 11 dists, orders swift relief action

PNS ■ LUCKNOW/GORAKHPUR

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Sunday, reviewed the flood situation in 11 districts of Uttar Pradesh. These districts have been impacted by continuous rainfall and the release of water from the mountains due to adverse weather over the past three days. The chief minister specifically instructed officials from Kushinagar, Maharajganj, Lakhimpur Kheri, Ballia, Farrukhabad, Gonda, Kanpur Nagar, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Sitapur, Hardoi and Shahjahanpur to ensure full preparedness in conducting relief operations. He directed officials to personally visit the affected areas, monitor the situation, and accelerate relief efforts. He emphasised the need to provide all possible assistance to the affected population. Following Chief Minister Yogi's instructions, multiple teams from the State Disaster Response Force, National Disaster Response Force and Provincial Armed Constabulary have been

deployed in the affected districts. The chief minister also instructed district magistrates to assess crop damage and submit reports to the government so that compensation for affected farmers could be processed. Additionally, the chief minister called for immediate financial aid for those whose homes had been damaged or livestock lost due to the floods. Relief Commissioner Bhanu Chandra Goswami stated that following Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's directives, relief efforts are being conducted on a war-footing in 11 flood-affected districts of UP. In Kushinagar, five villages in one tehsil have been impacted by flooding from the Gandak river, affecting around 8,000 people due to waterlogging. Sixteen flood shelters have been set up, with 42 boats pre-positioned, and one team each from the NDRF and PAC deployed for rescue operations. NDRF teams successfully rescued 10 people stranded in floodwaters in Shivpur village. In Maharajganj, one village in

one tehsil has been affected by the Gandak river, impacting 45 people. A flood shelter has been established, where 45 individuals are currently residing. Relief operations are supported by one boat, with 55 boats pre-positioned. On Sunday, 2,095 lunch packets were distributed. Teams from both the NDRF and PAC have been deployed for relief efforts. In Lakhimpur Kheri, 11 villages in four tehsils have been affected by floods, with seven villages experiencing erosion. Approximately 19,500 people have been impacted. Fourteen flood shelters have been established, and 26 boats have been deployed for carrying out relief work. On Sunday, 550 food packets were distributed, with NDRF and PAC teams actively engaged in rescue operations. The relief commissioner reported that 18 villages across three tehsils in Ballia are affected by floods, with five villages experiencing erosion with agricultural damage in nine others. Currently, 8,300 people are affected by waterlogging. Seventy-one flood shelters have been set up, with three operational, housing 700 people.

Fifteen boats have been deployed for relief efforts, with 202 boats pre-positioned. On Sunday, 200 food items and 1,200 lunch packets were distributed. Teams from both the NDRF and SDRF are actively involved in rescue operations. In Farrukhabad, one village in one tehsil has been impacted, affecting 350 people due to waterlogging. Twenty-four flood shelters have been established, with two boats deployed for relief work, and a total of 15 boats on standby. A PAC team has been stationed in the district. In Gonda, three villages in one tehsil near the Ghaghra river are affected, with 452 people impacted by waterlogging. Thirty-one flood shelters have been set up, with three boats deployed for relief operations and 92 boats pre-positioned. On Sunday, 260 lunch packets were distributed, and teams from the SDRF and PAC were engaged in relief work. In addition, relief efforts are progressing rapidly in the flood-affected districts of Kanpur Nagar, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Sitapur, Hardoi and Shahjahanpur.

Yogi: True freedom from anarchy lies in integration of education & spirituality

PNS ■ GORAKHPUR

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Sunday, said that in today's world, true freedom from anarchy can only be achieved through integration of education and spirituality. He encouraged the revival of the traditional Arya Samaj practices of 'yajna' and 'havan' in gurukuls, saying that the customs helped maintain a spiritual and disciplined atmosphere in gurukuls in the olden times leading to better academic results. The chief minister inaugurated a new auditorium, five classrooms, and an administrative building at Mewalal Gupta Gurukul Vidyalaya. He praised the efforts of the Gorakhpur Gurukul Society for reviving the gurukul stating, "The construction work has been completed on time by the Gorakhpur Development Authority with a CSR (corporate social responsibility) fund of Rs 1 crore 5 lakh." Chief Minister Yogi also emphasised the need to introduce skill development and entrepreneurship training alongside education at



gurukuls, ensuring that no child is left without access to learning. He underlined the importance of making every child self-reliant, adding that these efforts in education will contribute to making India a developed nation. The chief minister, during his visit to the Gorakhpur Gurukul Vidyalaya, shared the school's rich history, noting that it was established in 1935. He revealed that the British government had shut down the Gurukul for five years due to its involvement in spiritual and political activities. Despite this setback, the school later reopened and is currently operating as a higher sec-

ondary institution. Over time, however, a lack of resources led to a decline in student numbers, but with new construction and resources, the school is now being revived. During the event, Chief Minister Yogi reiterated the state government's commitment to ensuring quality education for every child and improving health facilities for all citizens. Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's National Education Policy (NEP), he highlighted that it was designed for the holistic development of students and was aligned with modern needs. He also mentioned that under the Ayushman Card Scheme, free healthcare services are being provided to 10 crore people across the state. Earlier, Chief Minister Yogi toured the Gurukul Vidyalaya, observing classroom activities and interacting with the students. He also planted saplings on the school premises and witnessed a cultural performance, where girl students presented a beautiful rendition of Ganesh Vandana to begin the programme. On this occasion, MP Ravi Kishan Shukla, Mayor Manglesh Shrivastava, Gorakhpur University Vice-Chancellor Prof Poonam Tandon, Gorakhpur Gurukul Society President Pramod Kumar, Mahant Ravindra Das of Kalibari, UP State Commission for Women Vice-Chairperson Charu Chaudhary, Bharatiya Janata Party metropolitan president Rajesh Gupta, Sitaram Jaiswal, Councilor Pawan Tripathi, Shivshankar Gupta, Parmeshwar Prasad Gupta, Indradev Vidyarthi, Jagdish Gupta, Divisional Commissioner Anil Dhingra along with administrative officers, teachers and others were present.

CM stresses zero tolerance towards negligence



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath during 'Janta Darshan' programme in Gorakhpur on Sunday

PNS ■ GORAKHPUR

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath listened to the concerns of around 200 people at the Janata Darshan held in the Mahant Digvijaynath Smriti Bhawan auditorium of the Gorakhpur temple complex on Sunday morning. He emphasised the need for swift and satisfactory resolution of people's problems, directing officials to act promptly and with full accountability. The chief minister stressed that there was no place for negligence or delays, underscoring the need for every issue to be addressed with transparency and efficiency. He reiterated that addressing public grievances is a top government priority, and warned that any laxity in this regard would be unacceptable. Chief Minister Yogi listened to the concerns of people one by one and forwarded their applications to the relevant officials with instructions for swift res-

olution. The chief minister assured the public that no injustice would be tolerated. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to resolving the problems of every individual, particularly emphasising the need for strict action against those who illegally occupy land or exploit the vulnerable. He instructed officials to take decisive legal measures against such offenders without exception. Several people approached Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath during the Janata Darshan, seeking financial assistance for medical treatment. He assured them of the government's full support, and after handing their applications to the officials, he directed that the treatment cost estimates be expedited and promptly submitted to the government. He also instructed the officials to ensure that all eligible individuals are enrolled under the Ayushman Yojana for health-care coverage. Additionally,

the chief minister emphasised the need for transparent and impartial handling of revenue and police-related issues raised during the Janata Darshan. He stressed that no one should face injustice and that all victims should be treated with compassion and care. Chief Minister Yogi, who arrived in Gorakhpur late Saturday evening, followed his traditional Sunday morning routine. As usual, he began the day by offering prayers at the Gorakhnath temple, where he worshipped Guru Gorakhnath and paid respects at the samadhi of his mentor, Brahmaling Mahant Avedyanath. Afterward, he toured the temple premises, where his attention was drawn to a group of children who had come with their families. Smiling warmly, the chief minister called the children and engaged with them in friendly conversation. Before parting, he blessed the children and gave them chocolates.

Modi lauds contribution of Jhansi women

PNS ■ LUCKNOW/JHANSI

In his monthly radio address 'Mann Ki Baat' on Sunday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi once again highlighted Uttar Pradesh, specifically mentioning the remarkable water conservation efforts in Jhansi district. He praised the women of Jhansi for breathing new life into the Ghurari river and preventing water wastage, showcasing their commitment to addressing the country's water crisis. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath thanked Prime Minister Modi for recognising the efforts of the women from self-help groups (SHGs) in Jhansi, particularly in the water-scarce Bundelkhand region. Modi acknowledged the extraordinary work of these SHG women, who, as 'Jal Sahelis', led a campaign to revive the dying Ghurari river. He marvelled at their initiative to construct a check dam using sand-filled sacks in order to stop rainwater from going to waste and replenishing the river. The initiative successfully alleviated the region's water scarcity problem, bringing joy to the community. Modi emphasised that where 'Nari Shakti' (women's power) enhances 'Jal Shakti' (water power), 'Jal Shakti' in turn strengthens 'Nari Shakti'.



Members of 'Jal Saheli' group pose for photos after reviving Ghurari river at Simrawari village in Jhansi. PTI

The noteworthy efforts of these 'Jal Sahelis' took place in Simrawari village in Babina development block of Jhansi. With over six days of voluntary labour, they worked tirelessly to construct a dam that revived the Ghurari river. Their initiative not only revived the river but also sent a powerful message to society. The water retained in the river now provides essential resources for local people, serv-

ing their bathing needs and providing drinking water for animals. The Yogi government has undertaken water conservation efforts across Bundelkhand with unprecedented determination, overcoming numerous challenges. As a result, most households in Vindhya and Bundelkhand have now received water connections. Additionally, initiatives such as the reconstruction of village ponds, installing rainwater harvesting systems, and cleaning reservoirs have been implemented. The Yogi government is also actively promoting women-led self-help groups across the state. In recognition of their contributions to water conservation, the 'Jal Sahelis' has been honoured by the state and Central governments. These women continue to support government efforts in water conservation across Bundelkhand and play a vital role in raising awareness about the importance of preserving water resources.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath expressed his gratitude to Prime Minister Modi and congratulated the women who have become a source of inspiration for water conservation. On his X handle, he wrote: "Prime Minister Narendra Modi's mention of the efforts made by the self-help group women of Jhansi, who became 'Jal Sahelis' to revive the dying Ghurari river, in the 'Mann Ki Baat' programme is a moment of pride for all of Uttar Pradesh. This recognition will undoubtedly infuse new energy into ongoing water conservation efforts. These 'Jal Sahelis', who have become a remarkable symbol of women's empowerment by constructing hundreds of water bodies, have set an exemplary standard for water conservation despite facing many obstacles. Heartfelt congratulations to these women who have become an inspiration for water conservation, and sincere thanks to the prime minister for his acknowledgment!"

PM commends UP in Mann Ki Baat; CM expresses gratitude

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Prime Minister Narendra Modi once again lauded Uttar Pradesh during the 'Mann Ki Baat' radio broadcast on Sunday, commending the state for its commitment to the Swachh Bharat Mission and Atmanirbhar Bharat, particularly highlighting its tree plantation efforts. Following the programme, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath expressed his gratitude to the Prime Minister through a post on social media platform X. In his message, Chief Minister Yogi noted that over 26 crore saplings have been planted under the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign in Uttar Pradesh, calling it a testament to the state's responsibility and love for Mother Earth. He emphasised that inspired by the prime minister and supported by the state government, this campaign has transformed into a mass movement, engaging participants from rural panchayats to urban areas. The involvement of schools, colleges and local organisations has elevated this initiative to new heights, he added. The chief minister highlighted that the 'Mann Ki Baat' programme will celebrate its successful 10th anniversary on October 3. He said, "The programme

has become a vital platform for uniting the nation and connecting citizens with various national and social initiatives. 'Mann Ki Baat' has fostered positive changes in key areas such as cleanliness, Digital India, women's empowerment, environmental protection and youth development." Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath congratulated the prime minister and all 'Swachhata Praharis' on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the 'Swachh Bharat Mission' on October 2. He described this mission as a tribute to the Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi, emphasising its role in raising public awareness about cleanliness. The chief minister encouraged the people of Uttar Pradesh to engage with this campaign and to pledge their commitment to building a strong and capable India in line with the prime minister's vision of cleanliness. Building on the theme of Atmanirbhar Bharat discussed in the prime minister's 'Mann Ki Baat' programme, Chief Minister Yogi urged citizens to purchase indigenous products during the festival season. Echoing the prime minister's call, he advocated for the adoption of the 'Vocal for Local' mantra, reminding shoppers to prioritise goods that are 'Made in India.'

Centre to hold simultaneous elections with three new bills

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre is likely to bring three bills, including two to amend the Constitution, to put in place its plan to hold simultaneous elections. One of the proposed Constitution amendment bills, that deals with aligning the local bodies elections to that of the Lok Sabha and the Assemblies, will require an endorsement from at least 50 per cent of the states. Moving ahead with its 'one nation, one election' plan, the government earlier this month accepted the recommendations of the high-level committee for holding simultaneous polls for the Lok Sabha, state assemblies and local bodies in a phased manner after a countrywide consensus-building exercise. The proposed first constitutional amendment bill would deal with making provisions for holding Lok Sabha and state legislative assembly elections together. Citing recommendations of the high-level committee, sources said the proposed bill would seek to amend Article 82A by adding sub-clause (1) relating to the 'appointed date'. It will also seek to insert sub-clause (2) to Article 82A relating to the end of terms of



the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies together. It also proposes to amend Article 83(2) and insert new sub-clauses (3) and (4) relating to the duration and dissolution of the Lok Sabha. It also has provisions related to the dissolution of the legislative assemblies and amending Article 327 to insert the term "simultaneous elections". This bill will not require ratification by at least 50 per cent of the states, the

recommendation said. The proposed second Constitutional amendment bill will require ratification by at least 50 per cent of the state assemblies as it will deal with matters relating to state affairs. It will seek to amend constitutional provisions relating to the preparation of electoral rolls by the Election Commission (EC) in consultation with State Election Commissions (SECs) for elections to local

Constitutionally, the EC and SECs are separate bodies. The EC holds elections to the post of the President, the Vice President, Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, state assemblies and state legislative councils while the SECs are mandated to conduct polls to local bodies such as municipalities and panchayats. The proposed second Constitutional amendment bill will also create provisions to hold simultaneous elections to municipalities and panchayats, along with

elections to Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies by inserting a new Article 324A. The third bill will be an ordinary one to amend provisions in three laws dealing with Union territories having legislative assemblies — Puducherry, Delhi and Jammu and Kashmir — to align the terms of these Houses with other legislative assemblies and the Lok Sabha as proposed in the first constitutional amendment bill. The statutes it proposes to

amend are the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act-1991, the Government of Union Territories Act-1963 and the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act-2019. The proposed bill will be an ordinary legislation not requiring a change in the Constitution and will also not need ratification by the states. The high-level committee had proposed amendments to three Articles, insertion of 12 new sub-clauses in the existing articles and tweaking three laws related to Union Territories having legislative assemblies. The total number of amendments and new insertions stands at 18. In its report submitted to the government in March, just before the general election was announced, the panel recommended implementing "one nation, one election" in two phases. It suggested simultaneous polls for the Lok Sabha and state assemblies in the first phase and elections for local bodies like panchayats and municipal bodies within 100 days of the general election in the second phase. It also recommended a common electoral roll, which would need coordination between the Election Commission and State Election Commissions.



Union Minister and BJP National President JP Nadda, and others listen to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Mann Ki Baat' radio programme, in New Delhi, Sunday

Photo by: RANJAN DIMRI/THE PIONEER

'Mann Ki Baat' showcases positive developments: Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserted on Sunday that his monthly radio broadcast 'Mann Ki Baat' has shown that people like positive developments and inspiring and encouraging stories. Speaking in the latest episode of the radio programme in which he touches on social issues and highlights people's efforts for a cause in different parts of the country, he noted that the broadcast is completing 10 years. Describing it as an "emotional" episode, he said the programme has become a unique platform that celebrates the spirit of India and showcases collective strength of the nation. He also thanked the media for taking its message to people. Modi said there is generally a perception that people don't pay attention if the content is not spicy or negative. However, 'Mann Ki Baat' has shown that they are eager for positive information. People like

positive things, inspiring examples and encouraging stories, he noted. Modi said the 'Make in India' programme is completing its 10 years, asserting that export is rising in every sector and the rise in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is a testimony to its success. It has helped local manufacturers a lot, he added. When people start taking pride in their heritage, the world also respects their sentiments, he said, asserting that a large number of ancient artefacts has been returned to India by different countries in the last 10 years of his government. In the programme, he highlighted the success of the 'Swachh Bharat' mission, lauding it as a great tribute to Mahatma Gandhi who put special emphasis on cleanliness all his life.



Himalayan research project to analyse sediment impact

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

As climate change intensifies hazards such as landslides, avalanches, and glacial floods in high mountain regions including Himalayas, a team of researchers from India, Canada and UK is set to conduct a study to understand the long-term impacts of sediment moved by these disasters on communities and river systems including Ganges river. The team, including experts from IIT Roorkee and the Dehradun-based Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology, will start research at a 150 km stretch of the Ganges River impacted by the 2021 disaster in Chamoli nestled in Himalayan region in Uttarakhand. Triggered by a rock and ice avalanche, this catastrophic event caused a devastating debris flood, resulting in over 200 fatalities and significant damage to two hydropower stations including Tapovan Vishnu Gad Hydropower. The landslide also temporarily created a dam in the Rishiganga valley, which eventually breached. The £1 million research SUPERSLUG project, led by researchers from the University of Plymouth, will center around the 2021 disaster and focus on understanding how massive sediment flows—termed "sediment slugs"—affect river systems over time, often impacting areas far from the original disaster site. Utilising advanced monitoring technologies such as drones, satellite imagery, seismic sensors, and "smart cobbles," the team will gather data on sediment transport and landscape changes. This information will help create a digital twin of the river system, offering insights for disaster management and resource sustainability. Dr. Matt Westoby, the project lead and Associate Professor

of Physical Geography at the University of Plymouth, emphasised the urgency of this research which is backed by an £840,000 grant from the Natural Environment Research Council. He noted that while the immediate impacts of disasters are clear, the long-term consequences often remain unexplored. "High mountain regions like the Himalayas are among the most hazardous on the planet. The effects of climate change are likely to exacerbate these hazards, leading to increased landslide activity and landscape instability," he said. "We urgently need to understand the legacy impacts of sediment flows on river catchments and the communities that depend on them for water and livelihoods." The project will engage directly with local communities and authorities to ensure that findings are practical and beneficial for disaster preparedness and hydropower operations. Collaborating institutions also include Exeter, Hull, Leeds, Newcastle, Staffordshire, and the University of Calgary. Professor Tom Coulthard from the University of Hull highlighted the importance of understanding sediment movement. "Often it's the sheer volume of sediment, rather than just floodwaters, that causes significant damage during these multi-hazard events. Understanding how long sediment slugs persist in the system is crucial for predicting their impacts and managing future disasters." In a nut-shell, as per the statement from the University of Hull, this three-year initiative aims to fill critical knowledge gaps regarding the long-term effects of sediment slugs on ecosystems and communities, ultimately enhancing disaster resilience in vulnerable regions.

CITU protests FSNL disinvestment

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) on Sunday protested on Government's move to disinvest the profit making PSU Ferro Scrap Nigam Limited (FSNL). The CITU general secretary Tapan Sen in a statement said the Central Government is resorting to all "illegal practices" to sell the Mini Ratna company to Japan's M/s. Konoike Transport Co. Ltd and must roll back from the sale. Extending solidarity with the striking employees of FSNL, the CITU pointed out that PSU Navratna steel companies

are completely dependent on FSNL for scrap handling since its inception. "With utter surprise, no consultation with them has at all been initiated by the government on such a vital issue and the top managements of FSNL are also not properly aware of this clandestine move. "FSNL is a company having a reserve fund of about Rs 200 crore and movable assets worth Rs100 crore employing more than 600 employees and 5,000 contract workers. During the year ended March 31, 2022, Company has paid Interim Dividend for FY 2021-22 amounting to Rs 9.50 per

equity shares," said CITU in a statement detailing the profits of the FSNL. CITU said that "such a golden egg producing company is straight away being guillotined by the government because of its sheer obsession for privatization factually without any valid reason". "CITU once again condemns the authoritarian anti-National move of the Modi government and stands strong with striking FSNL workers. CITU calls upon all its units to take this issue to all sections of workers and mobilize them in solidarity with this anti-privatization struggle," said CITU.

Mental health certificates now needed for Transgender pre-hormonal therapy, surgery

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Transgenders who want to go for pre-hormonal therapy or gender assignment surgery need to be assessed and certified by mental health professionals, according to the Union Health Ministry's standard operating procedures for the purpose. As for gynaecologists, the 'SoP for Medical Treatment of Transgender Persons' states that they should enquire as to how the patient wishes to be addressed in terms of name and pronoun, and also ensure that the words they use uphold the principles of safety, dignity and respect. Outlining the responsibilities of mental health professionals, the SoP document said their primary role would include assessment for gender incongruence, as per the

current diagnostic system followed by the World Health Organization, and certification for the same. Gender incongruence is characterised by a marked and persistent disparity between an individual's experienced gender and the assigned sex. It often leads to a desire for a 'transition' through hormonal treatment, surgery or other healthcare services in order to live and be accepted as a person of the experienced gender. According to the SOP, "Before endocrinology treatment, a certificate from one psychiatrist is required. Before Gender Affirmation Surgery, two certificates are required -- one by a clinical psychologist/psychiatrist." Apart from that, a mental health professional would also assess for distress and co-



morbid mental and/or substance use disorders and provide management of the same, the document stated. They would also provide support or therapy, if needed, to cope with issues related to gender incongruence, including participation in integrated cross-disciplinary care and intersectoral

collaboration for clients and caregivers. "The support would be provided pre-hormonal therapy/gender assignment surgery, during the period as well as post-surgery, if need be," it stated. According to the document, one cannot undergo gender affirmation surgery before the age of 18 years and a

certificate of being stable on endocrine treatment for one year and suitability for surgical procedure is required before gender affirmation surgery. The SOP stressed the need to make STD clinics friendly to gender-diverse patients and such facilities should document gender identity and sex assigned at birth for all patients to improve sexual healthcare for transgenders and gender nonbinary persons. Primary care providers should take a comprehensive sexual history, including a discussion on Sexually transmitted infection (STI) screening, HIV PREP and PEP, behavioural health, and social determinants of sexual health. Clinicians can improve the experience of sexual health screening and counselling for transgender persons by

asking for their choice of terminology or modifying language to be used during clinic visits and history taking and examination, the SOP stated. Options for fertility preservation, pregnancy potential and contraception options should also be discussed, if indicated, the document said. As for the Fertility Preservation in Transgenders (Female to Male), the SoP states that the established method for fertility preservation includes cryopreservation of embryos and oocytes for females. Ovarian tissue cryopreservation is also a successful technique for fertility preservation and is no longer experimental, the document stated, adding that it has limited availability and is possible only after attaining puberty.



Prakash Karat to lead CPI(M) interim

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Senior CPI(M) leader Prakash Karat will be the coordinator of the party's Polit Bureau and the Central Committee as an interim arrangement until the 24th Party Congress to be held in April next year. The decision comes in the wake of the death of CPI(M) General Secretary Sitaram Yechury on September 12 at the age of 72. "The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), now in session in New Delhi, has decided that Comrade Prakash Karat will

be the coordinator of the Polit Bureau and the Central Committee, as an interim arrangement until the 24th Party Congress to be held in April 2025 at Madurai," the CPI(M) said. "This decision was taken due to the sad and sudden demise of the sitting General Secretary of the CPI(M), Comrade Sitaram Yechury," it added. Karat, one of the senior most leaders of the CPI(M), was its general secretary from 2005 to 2015. He was elected to the Central Committee in 1985 and became a Polit Bureau member in 1992.

Congress demands Sitharaman's resignation over extortion

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Congress on Sunday attacked the BJP after a case was lodged against Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and others on a complaint relating to the now-scrapped electoral bonds scheme and demanded her resignation for "undermining democracy". The opposition party reiterated its demand for a Supreme-court monitored inquiry through an SIT into the whole electoral bond scheme. Addressing a press conference here along with party spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi, Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh charged that four ways were used to extort money through the "conspiracy of electoral bonds — prepaid bribery, postpaid bribery, post-raid bribery and through farzi companies". He said the Finance Minister should immediately resign as



she is "guilty" politically, legally and morally. Ramesh said the FIR was lodged on orders of the court and the Congress has nothing to do with the FIR. He said the Congress has been demanding a Supreme-court monitored inquiry through an SIT into the electoral bonds scheme and reiterates that demand. Singhvi also accused the BJP of "undermining democracy". "The Finance Minister cannot do this on her own. We know who is number 1 and number 2 and this was done on whose

directions," he said. "The larger issue is the level playing field which is necessary for free and fair polls. Free and fair polls are critical for democracy. This is an attack on our democratic system," Singhvi said while terming it as "EBS - Extortionist BJP Scheme". A case was registered on Saturday against Sitharaman and others on the directions of a court in Bengaluru, following a complaint relating to the now-scrapped electoral bonds scheme. According to police, an FIR

was registered under IPC sections 384 (punishment for extortion), 120B (criminal conspiracy) and 34 (acts done by several persons in furtherance of common intention) against Sitharaman, ED officials, office-bearers of the BJP at state and national level, based on the order of a special court. BJP Karnataka chief B Y Vijayendra and party leader Nalin Kumar Kateel have also been named in the FIR. The complaint was lodged by Adarsh R Iyer, Co-President of 'Janaadhikaara Sangharsha Parishath' (JSP) alleging that the accused "committed extortion under the guise and garb of electoral bonds" and benefited to the tune of more than Rs 8,000 crore. The complainant further alleged that Sitharaman through the clandestine aid and support of ED officials facilitated extortion of thousands of crores of rupees for the benefit of others both at the state and national levels.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Saving Sunita Williams

Relying on her mental fortitude, Sunita has not only survived the ordeal but plays a crucial role in her rescue

It is heartening to hear that Sunita Williams will be back home soon. Elon Musk's SpaceX has launched a Falcon 9 rocket from Cape Canaveral, Florida to rescue two astronauts stranded in the International Space Station (ISS). The mission aims to retrieve American astronauts Butch Wilmore and Sunita Williams, who have been stranded on the International Space Station for months due to issues with Boeing's Starliner spacecraft. Originally planned for an eight-day stay, the astronauts' mission was extended far beyond after technical problems with the Starliner. As every Indian waits for her rescue the image of Kalpana Chawla flashes in the mind who lost her life in a space mission. She was one of the seven crew members who died in the Space Shuttle Columbia disaster when the spacecraft disintegrated during its re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere on February 1, 2003. The vast, unexplored frontier of space offers countless wonders, but it also brings unique challenges. The present snag is no fault of the astronauts but a lapse on the part of NASA and Boeing company which allowed the mission to proceed despite several alarms and glitches.



Sunita Williams, a veteran of two spaceflights and a woman who has spent over 300 days in space, embarked on her latest mission with the confidence and expertise that comes from years of training and commitment. However, space is as unpredictable as it is vast. A critical error occurred during her mission, which disabled vital components of the spacecraft, leaving her stranded in the ISS. The malfunction wasn't just a minor glitch-it was a cascade of failures.

Yet, if there was one person equipped to face such adversity, it was Sunita Williams. Her resilience, mental fortitude, and the ability to maintain calm in even the most extreme conditions became the defining elements in her survival. Williams is no stranger to adversity. The daughter of Indian and Slovenian immigrants, she broke barriers early in her career by rising to prominence in a male-dominated field. Her indomitable spirit and work ethic have always stood out. She has done space-walk, she holds the record for the longest single spaceflight by a woman, spending 195 days in space until 2017. Over her career, Williams has accumulated more than 322 days in space, marking her as one of the most experienced female astronauts in history. Sunita Williams approached this life-threatening situation with a mix of grit, hope, and resourcefulness. She immediately got involved in troubleshooting, all the while keeping her own morale high through mental exercises and meditation. Let's hope and pray that the rescue mission succeeds and Sunita along with colleague Butch Wilmore reaches home safely and is united with her family. This mission is also a lesson and learning for NASA and its contractors to ensure zero tolerance for any glitches and snags in their operations.

PICTALK



Artists perform 'Mahishasur Mardini' act ahead of Durga Puja festival, in Nadia district

Transforming India through 'Make in India'



PIUSH GOYAL

The 'Make in India' initiative has completed 10 years of transformative impact. PM Modi's vision has ignited a revival in manufacturing and spurred job creation

On September 25, the country observed 10 years of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's game-changing 'Make in India' initiative that is transforming India's industrial landscape by encouraging job-creating investments and giving many ordinary citizens the confidence to become wealth creators. It's been a remarkable 10-year journey, which gave renewed vigour to industrial sectors turning these into engines of growth, meeting domestic demand as well as contributing to exports. The exciting journey began at a difficult time when domestic investors were despondent because of the policy paralysis and poor governance by the indecisive Congress government.

The economy was down, confidence was shattered, headlines were dominated by a regular dose of corruption scandals, inflation was soaring, interest rates were high and the rupee had an uncertain outlook. To end the feeling of doom and gloom, the Indian voters decisively voted for PM Modi. Our Prime Minister came with a vision for India. He wanted to ensure that India became a global superpower. He wanted India to provide jobs and opportunities to our youth, recognising that manufacturing was critical to India's success story. That is when the PM launched the 'Make in India' initiative. Ten years has been a remarkable journey, but it would not have been possible for the multidimensional and transformative changes done by the Modi government. Initiatives include GST, the Bankruptcy Code and a multitude of other reforms. To improve the ease of doing business, as many as 42,000 compliance requirements were done away with, and 3,700 provisions that provided for criminal penalties for minor offences were removed from various statutes to protect small businesses from harassment. India sharply improved its rank in the World Bank's Doing Business Report from 142nd in 2014 to 63rd in 2019. The government's Startup India initiative



has encouraged many job seekers to become job creators with the help of Startup India initiative. This has helped the number of recognised startups increase to 1,40,803 in June this year, bringing in investments, and creating more than 15 lakh jobs.

These startups are driving the innovation ecosystem in the country, working on solutions to pressing issues in areas such as sanitation, space navigation, reducing food wastage, improving access to healthcare, and empowering women. The development of 11 Industrial Corridors is another focus area of the Government. 20 industrial smart cities are being developed under the programme, which would help make these corridors the backbone of India's manufacturing growth. Four of these smart cities have already become magnets of investment with infrastructure and clearances available for manufacturing units to be set up. Potential investment of Rs 1.7 lakh crore is already committed which will provide direct employment to 80,000 persons and indirect to many more. The Government's PLI schemes focus on critical sectors such as electronics, pharmaceuticals, automobiles, textiles and medical devices to create the eco-systems in these sectors for sustained growth

and ensure their global competitiveness. PLI schemes have resulted in Rs 1.32 lakh crore in investment and a significant boost in manufacturing output of around 11 lakh crore. More than 8.5 lakh jobs have been created directly and indirectly through this initiative.

The Prime Minister's initiatives on infrastructure have been another shot in the arm of Indian manufacturing, apart from generating demand for goods and services, infrastructure development is a major facilitator of industrial activity. Today, India has a huge, and growing, network of expressways and highways. New, world-class railway stations are being built, while new freight corridors are coming up. India is increasingly being seen as a very attractive destination for investment. The country provides the 4D advantage - The decisive leadership of PM Modi; the Demographic dividend of our youthful, talented, skilled Indians; the Demand that 140 crore Indians generate in the economy; and Democracy that ensures the safety and security of investors, and the rule of law which will never allow discrimination against one or the other. The 4-D is a very, very compelling case to attract manufacturers to India. Domestic and international investors today find a golden

opportunity to grow their business. There is a flurry of activity in the investor community. A series of delegations is visiting India, hungry for opportunities to invest and participate in the Indian growth story. Foreign governments and global CEOs are keenly eyeing opportunities in India. Many countries are keen to sign trade deals with India.

The world is now looking at India as a manufacturing destination. And the key reason for this interest is India's competitive advantage and robust economic fundamentals. Today, inflation is under control, economic growth is strong and the Modi government is following strict fiscal discipline. This is all the more commendable in the current global situation marred by conflict and uncertainty. The initiatives of PM Modi have helped India rise from the unenviable situation of being regarded as one of the 'Fragile Five' in the world in 2014, to being one of the Top Five in the world. In effect, PM Modi's initiatives like Make in India have contributed to making the last 10 years a transformational decade - a quantum jump over the lost decade of Congress rule.

(The writer is Minister of Commerce and Industry; views expressed are personal)



MANY COUNTRIES ARE KEEN TO SIGN TRADE DEALS WITH INDIA. THE WORLD IS NOW LOOKING AT INDIA AS A MANUFACTURING DESTINATION. AND THE KEY REASON FOR THIS INTEREST IS INDIA'S COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AND ROBUST ECONOMIC FUNDAMENTALS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

QUAD STRENGTHENS INDIA'S ROLE

Madam — China's aggressive posture has consistently threatened peace in the Indo-Pacific region. India, has faced quite a few challenges from the latter. It is a matter of pride that New Delhi is looked upon by other countries to be their firm partner on global platforms to tackle Beijing's economic and military prowess. Specifically, the Asia-Pacific region was described as Indo-Pacific to denote India's increasingly active involvement in the region. The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) is one international forum that glues the four friendly nations—the United States, Japan, Australia and India—together. All these nations are keen to usher in a free and open Indo-Pacific region, diminishing the influence of a marauding Beijing. The four have been able to sustain a momentum that no country can ignore. In the fourth in-person Quad summit at US' Wilmington, leaders of the four countries underlined the importance of shared democratic values that have kept them together. Issues of health, security, climate change, capacity building and technology occupied the leaders' attention. More importantly, India is emerging as a 'leader' of the four, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi has proposed to host the next year's summit in New Delhi in 2025. It can only grow stronger from here.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

TOP COURT REJECTS GUJARAT PLEA

Madam — The Supreme Court has dismissed a plea filed by the Gujarat government seeking a review of the court's verdict, which contained certain observations against the State while quashing the remission granted to 11 men convicted of raping Bilkis Bano and murdering seven of her family during the 2002 riots. Having carefully gone through the review petitions, the order under challenge and the papers annexed therewith, the judges were satisfied

Durga Puja has transformed



This is in response to the article titled "A symphony of tradition and transformation" (September 29). In the mid-1980s, Durga Puja used to get celebrated with utmost devotion according to rituals with dominance of Bhakti encompassing both the organisers and public. Only on Saptami morning, we used to get awakened by the rhythmic beats of Dhak, all puja rituals used to

commence with rendition of Sanskrit mantras and people used to start flocking to the pandals.

But in last 4 decades all things associated with Durga Puja have undergone a sea change! Far from commencing the Puja on Saptami morning, many pandals and idols now open up for public "consumption" right from the Mahalaya itself thereby "promoting" 4-day Puja to a "modern" 10-day extravaganza! After all majority of these "glamorous" Puja committees do not care to actually offer homage to it through rituals mantras holy hymns or flowers! Durga Puja of today is nothing but a fashion show of sorts with exhibition of flexing muscles - be it monetary might or trophies garnered!

Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata

that there is no error apparent on the face of the record or any merit in the review petitions, warranting reconsideration of the order impugned.

The review petitions are, accordingly, dismissed and it is a landmark decision. The Gujarat government in its plea had said the apex court's observation in the January 8 judgement, holding the State guilty of "usurpation of power" and abuse of discretion" for complying with an order of another top court bench, was an "error apparent on the face of the record" primarily on three grounds.

CK Subramani | Kerala

TOURISM EDUCATION EMPOWERMENT

Madam — Tourism plays a pivotal role in the global economy acting as a bridge between cultures and fostering economic growth in various regions. It contributes approximately 10 per cent to the world's GDP and generates millions of employment opportunities, especially in rural and less developed areas.

By integrating tourism studies into academic curricula, institutions can equip students with essential skills in areas such as sustainable tourism practices, travel management and hospitality management.

This education not only prepares students for diverse career opportunities but also fosters a deeper understanding of how to balance tourism's economic benefits with environmental sustainability and cultural preservation.

Promoting tourism education in colleges cultivates a new generation ready to take the bull by the horns, driving innovation while advocating for responsible tourism practices that balance economic growth with social and environmental accountability. Moreover, it supports regional development by teaching students how to effectively market and manage local attractions thereby preserving cultural heritage while boosting local economies.

Tanisha Gupta | Ujjain

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Breaking life into small steps for lasting fulfillment



SANJAY CHANDRA

Happiness is actually the most important project of life. True contentment comes from savouring each step, no matter how small

Happiness is the most important project of life. It should be broken up into smaller activities to attain the eventual goal. The only time that we probably understand this is in our childhood. As a child, I had intuitively learned the art of allocating the hours of the day for various activities, like waking up, getting ready and spending time in school, having lunch on return, completing homework, going out to play, returning for dinner, and going to bed.

We lived in the present from one hour to the next. I was a satisfied and happy person as I could complete the 'Project Day'. We did not have the need or the time to look too far into the future. As we outgrew childhood, we forgot the lessons learned.

I joined college. Like others, I too started making grand resolutions on the first day of the year. My resolution could be as mundane as losing the 15 kgs within the first three months, which had taken me a year to gain.

It could also be an important resolution to secure 90 per cent marks in my semester examinations, a substantial



improvement over the 60 per cent in the previous one. Each resolution would fly out of the window within the first few months. I had forgotten to take small steps to reach the end destination.

Things did not improve even after I started working. I found a new toy - a 'To Do List'. A diary would be earmarked for this most important ritual.

I would start with one such list and continue adding till I had inked the second or third page with only a few activities completed. I would give up, and start all over again. The previous year's diary was promptly destroyed lest anyone glanced into it and called my bluff. This continued for a few years till I discovered the computer. I could delete these pending activities at will, with

no one any wiser to my shenanigans. I was fooling only myself. I quit my railway job to join a government company working in the execution of construction projects. I was exposed to software-based project management tools for the first time. I reluctantly spent weeks with the consultant to develop an activity-based project breakdown structure. He educated us about the importance of breaking each activity into smaller sub-activities. We were reluctant to accept that more activities to monitor would result in successful and timely completion.

He was not satisfied with the first draft of less than 100 activities. He was a tough taskmaster. We marched on, to our ever-increasing despair, and his impatience, till we

called it quits after we had reached 1000 odd activities. It was a revelation to me. I now appreciated the time that my wife spent planning the daily household chores. The exercise in project management also brought into stark focus all the wrong I was doing while making my New Year resolutions and the To-Do Lists, and more importantly, living my life.

I now understand why we remain unhappy most of the time. We forget to derive joy out of each step that we take, however small it may be. The young of today are far more mature. Hina Khan, a young actor, recently diagnosed with cancer, is a courageous woman fighting all that life has to throw at her. Her thoughts are the most inspiring words I have read in some time, "First normalise the challenges of your lives then set goals for yourself and try to live up to them all along the way. No matter how hard. Never back down. Never give up."

(The author is an electrical engineer with the Indian Railways and conducts classes in creative writing; views are personal)



FIRST COLUMN

HARNESSING INNER POTENTIAL

The human mind is still an enigma. It has enormous potential and is a reservoir of energy



RAVI VALLURI

His alcoholism became a quotidian habit. Dharmendra was making a last-ditch effort as he boarded a flight from Jaipur to the Art of Living Ashram in Bangalore. Fortunately, Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar had given him an appointment at 4 PM that evening. Stinking of liquor, and reeking of stale cigarettes, with an unsteady gait he landed at Bangalore airport. He needed a physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional, parachute. Only a 'Master' through grace could provide such a life support system. For some time, my friend was trying to seek redemption from the lethal disease of alcoholism. My inventory list was prepared: join a rehab, attend Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, and undertake the Happiness Programme of the Art of Living. Gurudev advanced the appointment to 11 AM., and after one glance asked my friend to get admitted to the Ayurveda Hospital in the Ashram for a complete detoxification of body, mind, and soul, and after a 15-day rehab to undergo the Happiness Programme. The Guru had scripted a change in the life of Dharmendra, it was for his mind to grab the opportunity. But the monkey mind invented an excuse and Dharmendra left the Ayurveda Hospital and once again indulged in brinkmanship. He could not draw the redlines or flag the issues confronting his mind and succumbed to temptation. While the brain is an organ that serves as the centre of the nervous system, the mind is the faculty of consciousness and thoughts. It is an individual's intellect, memory or attention span and will, whose potential needs to be enhanced or live in the past. Such individuals are unable to break the patterns and barriers of their comfort zone. Their prana levels



are exceedingly low and the pendulum of their mind's swings to the past. The moot question is how we use this enormous energy. If we look at the brighter aspects of life, such mental imagery works miraculously. Over some time the mind feels blessed, gains in abundance and becomes grateful. This is what Masters refers to as the

Law of Attraction

The Law of Attraction remains an illusion if it is not in conjunction with the Law of Gratitude. Both these laws operate in tandem and will fuel inner potential to harness growth leading to robust minds. Low and the pendulum of their minds swings to the past. They carry the burden of the past and attempt a course correction without any professional help (Guru) displaying false bravado in their imaginary worlds. They invariably try to also change the behavioural patterns of those close to them, essentially to market their point of view. Such minds invariably resort to shortcuts in life, trying to please everyone without any success. Ignoring the larger picture, this is a cunning and selfish mind, which does not trust anyone: basically, short of confidence and haunted by fear. The human mind is an enigma. It has enormous potential and is a reservoir of energy. The moot question is how we use this enormous energy. If we look at the brighter aspects of life, such mental imagery works miraculously. Over some time the mind feels blessed, gains in abundance and becomes grateful. Positive thoughts beget positivity and have a spiralling effect. The jigsaw puzzle of life gets sorted out. This is what Masters refer to as the Law of Attraction. The Law of Attraction remains an illusion if it is not in conjunction with the Law of Gratitude. Both these laws operate in tandem.

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)



ASHU KAPOOR

Since gaining independence, India has made significant strides in the field of education, especially in terms of infrastructure and expanding access to schools. Classrooms now accommodate children from all walks of life, and government initiatives have succeeded in bringing millions of students into the education system.

However, despite these achievements, a critical component remains neglected—the quality of learning. Infrastructure may be flourishing, but the foundational skills that students require for future success often lag behind. To understand this, imagine a farmer who diligently sows seeds in well-tilled soil, only to find the harvest insufficient because the seeds weren't suit-

ed to the soil. In the same way, India's educational progress in infrastructure is commendable, but the students' foundational skills—the seeds of education—are still not producing the robust results we hope for. Year after year, surveys like the National Status of Education Report (ASER) and the National Achievement Survey (NAS) reveal a startling reality: a large proportion of students struggle with essential

skills like basic literacy and numeracy.

These are the building blocks of education, without which the entire edifice remains shaky. Students are spending years in school, but many are not learning at the expected level. The alarming gap between schooling and actual learning points to a crucial flaw in the system. If foundational skills are not nurtured early on, the benefits of educational progress will remain elusive, much like the farmer's poor harvest.

The introduction of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 brings a renewed sense of hope. It promises transformative change and a shift towards a system that values not just access to education but the quality of learning.

Together with the National Curriculum Framework for Foundational and School Education, NEP 2020 emphasizes the need to measure educational progress through well-designed assessments and to tailor interventions accordingly. The goal is clear: to raise a generation of learners who are not only equipped with knowledge but also the critical thinking skills required to thrive in the modern world. Research consistently shows that assessments play a transformative role in improving education. Their primary goal is not to rank students or schools but to provide insights into where learners stand on their educational journey. By identifying what students know and can do at individual, school, and

system levels, assessments offer a roadmap for educators to develop targeted interventions that can address specific learning gaps. In the quest to transform learning, large-scale assessments like ASER and NAS will be pivotal. ASER, a household-based survey, provides insights into basic literacy and numeracy skills, while NAS offers a broader view of students' achievement of curricular outcomes. Recently, the State Educational Achievement Survey (SEAS) was conducted by NCERT to provide state-level insights into educational progress. Simply generating report cards on students' performance is not enough. The data must be used to inform policy decisions and to implement specific

interventions aimed at improving learning outcomes. If not, students will continue to face the same challenges year after year, with little improvement. Large-scale assessments should be seen as the first step in a larger strategy to address educational inequities. While NAS offers a broad overview of the education system, state-level assessment surveys (SAS) have the potential to zoom in on specific issues at the school level. NEP 2020 recognizes the importance of these surveys and recommends that each state conduct its own census-based assessment to drive continuous improvement. By focusing on local contexts, SAS can provide valuable insights into the unique challenges faced by

individual states, enabling more targeted interventions. However, the effectiveness of SAS depends on how well states define their objectives. To make SAS truly impactful, states need to align their assessment frameworks with clear objectives. A well-designed assessment should consider the needs of the educational system at the state level, and the data collected should be used to support and improve schools, rather than ranking them. India's states would do well to ensure that all stakeholders in the education system—teachers, school administrators, and district-level educators—are trained in data use and analysis. The road ahead is challenging, but the promise of census-based state assessments is

transformative. By monitoring student progress and providing data-driven insights, SAS can reshape India's educational landscape. When combined with national-level assessments like NAS, SAS has the power to create a more responsive, equitable education system. With a strategic approach and strong governance, India can ensure that every student has the opportunity to thrive. The writer is a Research Fellow at Australian Council for Educational Research (India) and a former Senior Academic Consultant at NCERT and Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India. Views are personal. Inputs by Dr Priyanka Sharma, Director ACER (India)

Can India become a manufacturing hub?



UTTAM GUPTA

Growth is driven by strong domestic demand, export potential, government infrastructure efforts, private sector investment, and initiatives like 'Make in India'



According to a Study Report by IDBI Capital, India is set to add US\$ 1 trillion to its gross domestic product (GDP) every 18 months over the next six years. It goes on to say that "with this momentum, the country is on track to become a US\$ 10 trillion economy positioning itself as the world's third-largest economy by 2030". Currently, India has a GDP of US\$ 4 trillion. The report has also highlighted that "India's accelerated growth will be driven primarily by the manufacturing sector, which is projected to contribute 32 per cent to the incremental Gross Value Added (GVA)". It adds "India will overtake the top five economies in manufacturing IIP (Index of Industrial Production) viz. US, China, Germany, South Korea and Japan..." Manufacturing essentially involves the production of a wide spectrum of consumer products, industrial machinery and so on.

It is the most important component of Industrial activity at a broader level which also includes Construction (primarily building infrastructure); Logistics (transportation and storage of goods); Aerospace (aircraft and spacecraft etc) and maintenance and services required to support industrial activities. The contribution of the Industrial sector to India's GDP is around 30 per cent of which manufacturing alone is 17 per cent. The share of Agriculture and allied activities in GDP is around 18 per cent. The remaining 52 per cent comes from the Services sector (SS).

The SS encompasses 'intangible' services such as education, health, entertainment, hospitality and tourism, banking, insurance and so on. While, all three sectors play a crucial role in growth, creating jobs and increasing incomes, manufacturing can provide a more sustainable basis for providing jobs and surety of income. This is in sharp contrast to agriculture which is fundamentally a seasonal activity and economic fortunes are largely tied to how monsoon pans out. Manufacturing can also provide a good buffer for absorbing the excess workforce from agriculture with positive spin-offs even for the latter in terms of higher productivity and income. Within the manufacturing sector, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) occupy a pivotal position. The



WHILE, ALL THREE SECTORS PLAY A CRUCIAL ROLE IN GROWTH, CREATING JOBS AND INCREASING INCOMES, MANUFACTURING CAN PROVIDE A MORE SUSTAINABLE BASIS FOR PROVIDING JOBS AND SURETY OF INCOME

MSMEs are ancillary units engaged in the production, manufacturing and processing of goods and commodities (mostly intermediate goods) which are supplied to large enterprises or master units. These units operate on a small scale and are further categorized into micro, small and medium enterprises depending on the 'investment' and 'turnover' threshold. According to the Ministry of Statistics & Program Implementation, the share of MSME manufacturing output in all India Manufacturing output is around 36 per cent. The share of export of MSME-specified products in all India exports has oscillated between 44 – 50 per cent during the last couple of years. As for employment, according to a report released by the McKinsey Global Institute (MGI), MSMEs in India contribute 62 per cent to the total. Yet, in the past, manufacturing hasn't been given the desired push. Its low contribution of 17 per cent in GDP and even lower share of total employment at about 10 per cent says it all.

Now, India aiming at the generation of 32 per cent of the incremental GVA from manufacturing shows its determination to put in the effort during the next six years or so, which is nearly double what it has done cumulatively to date. At this pace, by 2030, the share of manufacturing in GDP will have reached 26 per cent (4x0.17+6x0.32)/10.

Is it doable?

The factors that can make it happen are robust domestic demand; strong export potential; heavy lifting by the Central Government (plus support to States) by building infrastructure; increasing investment by the private sector; key initiatives such as "Make in India" playing a pivotal role in bolstering the country's manufacturing capabilities underpinned by the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes; India taking up a lead role in recalibrating global supply chains to position the country

as a global manufacturing hub; giving a boost to the micro small and medium enterprises (MSME) and so on. Nearly 70 per cent of India's GDP is driven by domestic consumption; Stimulating demand holds the key to putting manufacturing on an 'accelerated' and 'sustained' growth trajectory. For this, not only people's income should grow, but it should also be evenly and widely distributed. What do the facts speak? According to an Oxfam report, 'Inequality Kills', the collective wealth of India's 100 richest people in 2021 hit a record high of US\$ 775 billion or over 25 per cent of India's GDP. This shows the extreme inequalities in the distribution of income and wealth. There are other pointers to confirm that this is indeed so. According to an analysis of the financials of India's largest companies - those comprising the BSE 500 index - over five years, the profits of corporations included in this index more than doubled from Rs 480,000 crore during 2017-18 Rs 1000,000 crore during 2021-22, whereas their revenue growth was only 47 per cent.

This means that payments to factors of production other than the owners of capital such as to employees/workers, etc., have been kept under a tight leash, resulting in a disproportionate boost to profits. The aggregate dividend paid by these firms increased from Rs 176,000 crore during 2017-18 to Rs 302,000 crore during 2021-22, which is an increase of 72 per cent. In those five years, cumulatively, they paid 34 per cent of aggregate net profit as dividends. This is an unusually high payout ratio - even higher than 30 per cent paid by the world's largest companies in America's S&P 500.

The products made in India need to be priced low if they are to be competitive. But, there are three major reasons as to why prices are downward inflexible. First, several big businesses operating in metals

such as copper, zinc, aluminium or hydrocarbons like oil and gas, enjoy a natural monopoly enabling them to set high prices. Firms in the chemical, petrochemicals, pharmaceutical and agrochemicals sectors also charge more courtesy, high tariffs on imports and licensing and registration requirements. Second, you have the impact of high taxation particularly when it comes to petroleum products. These are taxed under the pre-GST regime leading to the high incidence of 80 per cent of the ex-refinery price of petrol (Delhi). Ditto in the case of diesel. Increasing the cost of the movement of goods raises the cost of almost every manufactured item. Third, how can one be oblivious of the exorbitant power tariff set in double digits in many states? The power distribution companies or discoms (mostly owned and controlled by the States) are forced to charge high rates on supplies to industries as they have to make up for the under-recoveries incurred on supplies to farmers and households, either free or at a heavily subsidized price.

Finally, industries are operating in highly interesting environments. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has kept the policy rate (the interest rate at which it lends money to banks) unchanged at a high of 6.5 per cent along with a 'withdrawal of accommodation' stance (a jargon for tight liquidity) for nearly 20 months. This leads to high cost loans to all industries across the board. The MSMEs are more vulnerable to all the above cost-push factors. To add salt to the injury, they get delayed payment for their dues from large firms. Unless the above fault lines are addressed, Initiatives under "Make in India" won't yield the desired result and India becoming a manufacturing hub of the world will remain a distant dream.

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

India's education system must prioritise learning over infrastructure

Despite schools being filled with students, foundational skills like basic literacy and numeracy continue to lag

India's seven per cent growth fails to generate jobs: Raghuram Rajan

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

With 7 per cent economic growth, India is not creating enough jobs as reflected by the number of applicants for vacant posts in some states, Reserve Bank's former governor Raghuram Rajan said and suggested the government needs to focus on promoting labour-intensive industries to generate employment.

Rajan further said some Indians, especially those at upper level, are comfortable and have high incomes, but consumption growth from the lower half of the country has still not recovered to pre-pandemic level.

"That is the unfortunate part..You would think with 7 per cent growth, we would be creating a lot of jobs. But if you look at our manufacturing growth, it is more capital intensive," he told PTI.

Rajan was asked whether the Indian economy, which is growing at 7 per cent, is creating enough jobs.

According to him, the industries that are more capital-intensive are growing faster, but labour-intensive industries are not growing.

"It is not going well at the lower level. I think the desperate need is for jobs. And you can see this, forget the official statistics. "You can see it in the number of applications for government jobs, which are overwhelming," said Rajan, who is a professor of finance at US-based Chicago Booth.

He said that in the medium term, the Indian economy will grow at 6-7 per cent. While welcoming the apprenticeship schemes announced by the finance minister in this year's Budget, Rajan said, "But we have to monitor that very closely, see what works and expand what works much more."

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had announced in the Union Budget of FY25 that the government will launch three employment-linked schemes based on enrolment in Employees' Provident Fund Organization (EPFO).

Citing examples of Vietnam and Bangladesh, which are doing well in labour-intensive industries like textile and leather, he said, "We need to look at this (labour-intensive industry)



very, very carefully, we cannot be left out." Asked why the private sector is still lagging as far as capital expenditure is concerned, Rajan said it is a little bit of a mystery.

"When you look at capital utilisation (of the private sector), it is about 75 per cent...It seems as if demand has not kept up to the point where they feel they need to make all that kind of investment," he opined.

And more importantly, Rajan said, India has a short span of 15 years to reap benefits of demographic dividend and it should not lose this opportunity.

Responding to a question on benchmark interest rate cut by the US Federal Reserve, Rajan said, "The 50 basis points rate cut by Fed has given them (central banks) more room to proceed at a pace that they think appropriate."

According to him, if the Fed had not cut rates, there would be a sense that, oh, the Fed is keeping rates high, so 'we have no room to moderate our policies.'

"I think the Fed has created more room for others to perhaps reduce interest rates, and so in that sense, people will be looking at their policies," he said.

To a question on Goods and Services Tax (GST) rates rationalisation, Rajan said after a policy has run for a fair amount of time, it is useful to ask, what has been the experience and 'do we need the policy change.'

"I would try and appoint an expert committee to go into it, to take the opinions, just like the Finance Commission does, take the opinions of the various stakeholders, including the states, and come up with something that meets the needs of the country," he said. Currently, GST is a four-tier tax structure with slabs at 5, 12, 18, and 28 per cent. The new taxation regime came into effect in 2017. Responding to a question about the ongoing debate on economically and socially better-off southern and western states

'subsidising' the northern and eastern states, Rajan said the Finance Commission has always been about the appropriate sort of allocation of taxes between the Centre and states."If India grows together, (then) in fact, it prevents this kind of conflict...There is the equity issue, which is that the states that are growing faster, have also in the process, typically grow wealthier. And that is what is happening in the case of western and in the southern states," he said.

Rajan pointed out that the western and southern states feel that they are penalised in two ways one is, they have to hand over more of their revenues to help some of the states who are falling behind. "Plus, on the political front, they may lose seats if there is a delimitation process (where seats in the Lok Sabha are to be allocated based on the results of the next Census), because, you know, the more populous states will get more seats," Rajan said.

Observing that there has to be some transfers from the richer states to the poorer states, he said, "We need to bridge this gap."

Government seeks industry inputs on Income Tax simplification

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government has proposed to invite suggestions on Income Tax Act, 1961, from the private sector and tax experts beginning October, as part of an exercise to simplify the direct tax law, sources said.

In a meeting with industry chambers earlier this month, the government said that a functionality will be created in the Income Tax portal wherein suggestions could be made on different sections of the I-T Act with a view to simplifying the language and reducing litigation.

Following the Budget announcement, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) had set up an internal committee for a comprehensive review of the six-decade old direct tax law and make it concise, lucid, easy to read and understand.

"In the meeting with industry associations, the revenue department suggested that the functionality be developed by the first week of October to give suggestions for reworking



the income tax law," a source said.

Another source said that the exercise is not to write a new tax law or a tax code. "Just by removing the outdated clauses, the number of pages could be brought down by about 100. The aim of the I-T law review is simplification of language and mitigation of litigation," the source added.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in 2024-25 Budget presented in July had proposed that the I-T law review would be completed in six months. Considering that the six-month timeline ends in January, it is widely expected that the amended I-T Act could be brought in the Budget session of Parliament.

Since no new changes are expected in the law, the amended Act could form part of the Finance Bill, 2025 as well, another source said.

Can the Tata's pull off their aviation plan?

KUSHAN MITRA ■ NEW DELHI

At midnight between 11-12, November Air Vistara will cease to function as an independent entity as the merger of Air India and Air Vistara will be solemnised. While it is certain that several of the 60-plus aircraft in Air Vistara's fleet will continue to operate in the airlines' famous aubergine livery for a few years, the Vistara flight code UK will be retired and it is certain that Air India will rationalise routes and services between the two airlines, a process that will not be easy.

To be fair, Tata Sons has already managed an airline merger, that of the former Air Asia India and Air India Express. However, that was much easier as both airlines were low-cost single-class operators, even though they operated different aircraft, Air Asia India, the Airbus A320 and Air India Express, the Boeing 737. But as the leases on older Airbus aircraft end, it is likely that the airline will move to a single fleet of Boeing 737 MAX aircraft. Things are much more



complex for the Air India and Vistara merger even though there is largely a single-type, the Airbus A320-family of aircraft. This is because of different aircraft configurations as well as different service and training standards. Many frequent flyers, including this writer, particularly on routes out of Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru are unhappy about small things like Air India's new domestic catering options. On a recent flight between Delhi and Kochi at lunchtime, the meal provided was wholly inadequate with a sandwich and stuffed bread roll, unlike Vistara's continuing proper meal service.

There is no need for airlines to offer a meal service, but if they claim to be 'full-service' carriers they should offer a proper meal or at least offer a decent 'Buy on Board' service. The largest airline in India does not pretend to offer 'full service'; but has a 'Buy on Board' service. However, as a frequent flyer, I sincerely recommend that flyers either bring their own food onboard or eat at an airport, no matter how overpriced the latter option is.

That said, consolidation of Air India and Vistara into one large airline is a huge opportunity for Tata Sons and Indian aviation to develop India into a proper global aviation hub and compete

with middle-eastern airlines such as Emirates and Qatar Airlines. Particularly as the Indian diaspora across the world grows and will travel back to their home, as well as growing the international inbound tourism market. India is also going to grow domestic aviation at an incredible rate with an estimated 250 million flyers annually by 2028.

But if the merger stalls for any reason, Tata Sons ought to be worried as IndiGo which has built themselves up into a massive presence in India, controlling half the domestic market, will certainly make an international and premium passenger play. On the latter front they have already announced that they will be starting a 'premium' class offering from later this winter as well as a new Frequent Flyer program called 'Blu-Chip'. And with an order for 30 new Airbus A350-900 wide-body aircraft and the new Airbus A321XLR entering service next year, IndiGo can potentially threaten Air India's global expansion plans as well.

SBI plans combo product of recurring deposit, SIP to attract depositors: Chairman

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

In a bid to attract depositors, State Bank of India is contemplating to come out with innovative products including a combo product of recurring deposit and SIP, said the bank's chairman C S Setty.

With the economy progressing, he said, customers are becoming financially more aware and demanding, and have started looking for innovative investment instruments.

Today the customers are looking at the value proposition as financial literacy improves and the concept of asset allocation will gain greater importance, he said.

"Obviously, nobody wants to put everything in a risky asset or a speculative asset...Banking products will always be part of the basket. So, we are trying to bring products which will appeal to

them," he told PTI in an interview.

"We are trying to bring innovation in some of the conventional products like recurring deposit, which is actually a conventional SIP...Maybe, we can combine both fixed deposit/recurring deposit and SIP, a combo product that could be digitally accessible," he said.

So, he said, these are the innovations which the bank is thinking of in terms of popularising the deposit products among the Gen Z.

Besides, he said, the bank has undertaken a massive outreach programme for the deposit mobilisation.

"As I said, for us, deposit mobilisation is a franchisee job. We have the largest number of physical outlets across the country. We are leveraging our huge physical reach by initiating outreach programmes where customers are contacted. Today, the effort on part of



SBI is to reach out to every customer both existing as well as new customers," he said.

Stressing that deposit is a function of interest rate and customer service, Setty said, "obviously, there is a requirement of adequately compensating our customers, but we would not like to fight in the rate war. I think most of the banks are also pursuing a balancing act of giving the right rate as well as right service. So, our focus is on improving the customer service and also adequately

compensating our customers."

In addition, he said, SBI has given thrust on opening new accounts and almost 50,000 to 60,000 savings bank accounts opened a day.

On the fixed deposit side, Setty said, almost 50 per cent of our fixed deposits are garnered through the digital channels only and also many accounts are opened through digital means.

Meanwhile, he also said that SBI is aiming to become the first Indian financial firm to cross a milestone of Rs 1 lakh crore net profit in the next 3-5 years.

SBI recorded a standalone net profit of Rs 61,077 crore in FY24, registering a growth of 21.59 per cent.

"We have potential. Definitely, we would like to be the first company in India to reach that milestone," Setty said when asked if it is possible to cross Rs 1 lakh crore in the next 3-5 years.

PM celebrates 10 years of Make in India, calls India a manufacturing powerhouse

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

With his government's flagship 'Make in India' initiative completing 10 years, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said India has become a manufacturing powerhouse and it is because of the country's youth power that the "whole world is looking up to us".

As the 'Make in India' initiative marked its 10th anniversary last week, the prime minister talked about it in his monthly 'Mann Ki Baat' radio broadcast and said the success of this campaign includes the contribution of the country's big industries as well as small shopkeepers.

Today, it gives me immense joy to see that the poor, the



middle class and MSMEs are getting a lot of benefit from this campaign. This campaign has provided an opportunity to people of every class to showcase their talent," Modi said.

"Today, India has become a manufacturing powerhouse and it is because of the youth power of the country that the

whole world is looking up to us. Be it automobiles, textiles, aviation, electronics or defence...every sector in the country's exports are constantly on the rise," he added.

The prime minister said the continual rise of FDI in the country is narrating the success saga of 'Make in

India'.

"Now we are mainly focusing on two things... The first is 'Quality', that is, goods made in our country should be of global standards... and the other is 'Vocal for Local'. That means, local products should get maximum promotion," Modi said.

In 'Mann Ki Baat' we've also

discussed 'My Product My Pride'.

How the people of the country can benefit from promoting local products can be understood through an example.

In Bhandara district of Maharashtra, there is an old textile tradition of 'Bhandara Tussar Silk Handloom'. Tussar Silk, is known for its colour, design and strength.

"In some areas of Bhandara, more than 50 'Self Help Groups are working to preserve it. Women have a huge participation in that. This silk is fast becoming popular and empowering local communities... and that is the spirit of 'Make in India'," he added.

In this festive season, Modi urged people that anything that they buy, should

necessarily be 'Made in India'.

"Anything you gift that too should be 'Made in India'. Merely buying earthen lamps is not 'Vocal for Local'. You should promote local products made in your area more and more.

Any such product, that has been made with the sweat of an Indian artisan, that is made on Indian soil, is our pride - we always have to lend glory to this pride," he said.

On the 10th anniversary of his government's 'Make in India' drive, Prime Minister Modi on Wednesday affirmed that the flagship initiative to boost manufacturing has transformed a dream into a powerful movement and its impact shows that "Bharat is unstoppable".

Reliance infrastructure wins arbitration case against DVC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Calcutta High Court has upheld a Rs 780 crore arbitration award in favour of Reliance Infrastructure Ltd in a dispute with West Bengal-based Damodar Valley Corporation, the Anil Ambani group firm said in a stock exchange filing.

More than a decade back, Reliance Infrastructure had won a contract to set up a 1,200 MW thermal power plant in Purulia in West Bengal for Rs 3,750 crore. The project was delayed due to disputes and other reasons, leading to DVC seeking damages from Reliance Infrastructure.

Reliance Infrastructure, however, challenged this, and

an arbitration tribunal in 2019 ruled in favour of the company and directed DVC to pay Rs 896 crore to the company. DVC challenged the order of the arbitral tribunal in the Calcutta High Court, which was dismissed by the court. "This is to inform that on September 27, 2024, the Division Bench of Hon'ble High Court of Calcutta delivered its judgment in a petition filed by DVC challenging the arbitration award under Section 34, dated September 29, 2023, amounting to approximately Rs 780 crore, including accrued interest in favour of the company concerning the Raghunathpur Thermal Power Project," the firm said.

Government approves transfer of Reliance TV licenses to Star India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government has approved the transfer of licence relating to non-news and current affairs TV channels held by the media entities of billionaire Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries to Star India.

According to regulatory filings by Reliance Industries and TV18 Broadcast, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting granted the approval in an order dated September 27.

"The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, vide its order dated September 27, 2024, has granted its approval for transfer of Licenses relating to Non News & Current Affairs TV channels held by Viacom18 Media

Private Limited in favour of Star India," it said.

This would be "subject to conditions laid by the Competition Commission of India".

Viacom18 is the holding company that owns the media and entertainment business of Reliance Industries and Bodhi Tree Systems.

Now, both sides are in the final stages of the merger, making some adjustments to the business as per the directions of the Competition Commission of India (CCI).

On August 30, the NCLT approved the scheme of merger of Viacom18 Media and Digital 18 Media, holding media and entertainment assets of Reliance Industries, with Star India. The scheme had proposed the transfer and vesting of Media Operations

Undertaking from Viacom 18 and Jio Cinema into Digital18, which is a subsidiary of Viacom 18. This would be followed by "demerger, transfer and vesting of V18 Undertaking from Digital 18 into Star India".

The merger of the media assets of Reliance Industries and The Walt Disney Co. Will create the country's largest media empire worth over Rs 70,000 crore. Earlier, the CCI had said it had cleared the "proposed combination involving Reliance Industries Ltd, Viacom18 Media Pvt Ltd, Digital18 Media Ltd, Star India Pvt Ltd and Star Television Productions Ltd, subject to the compliance of voluntary modifications".

Viacom18 is part of the RIL group, and SIPL is wholly

owned by The Walt Disney Company. STPL, a company incorporated in the British Virgin Islands, is owned indirectly by Walt Disney.

The CCI, however, did not disclose voluntary modifications in the original deal made by the two parties. Under the deal, the Mukesh Ambani-led RIL and its affiliates will hold 63.16 per cent of the combined entity that will house two streaming services and 120 television channels.

Walt Disney will hold the remaining 36.84 per cent stake in the combined entity, which will also be India's largest media house.

Nita Ambani, wife of RIL Chairman Mukesh Ambani, will head the joint venture, while Uday Shankar will be its vice-chairperson.

Mcap of 10 most valued firms surges to ₹ 1.21 lakh crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The combined market valuation of eight of the top-10 most valued firms surged Rs 1,21,270.83 crore last week, with Reliance Industries becoming the biggest gainer, in line with an outstanding rally in benchmark equity indices.

Last week, the BSE benchmark jumped 1,027.54 points or 1.21 per cent. The BSE Sensex hit its record high of 85,978.25 on Friday.

The market valuation of Reliance Industries jumped Rs 53,652.92 crore to Rs 20,65,197.60 crore. State Bank of India added Rs 18,518.57 crore taking its valuation to Rs 7,16,333.98 crore. Bharti Airtel's market valuation soared Rs 13,094.52

crore to Rs 9,87,904.63 crore and that of ITC grew by Rs 9,927.3 crore to Rs 6,53,834.72 crore.

The market capitalisation (mcap) of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) surged Rs 8,592.96 crore to Rs 15,59,052 crore. HDFC Bank's valuation climbed Rs 8,581.64 crore to Rs 13,37,186.93 crore and that of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) zoomed Rs 8,443.87 crore to Rs 6,47,616.51 crore.

The mcap of Infosys went up by Rs 459.05 crore. However, the market valuation of ICICI Bank tumbled to Rs 9,20,520.72 crore. The mcap of Hindustan Unilever declined by Rs 3,195.44 crore to Rs 6,96,888.77 crore. In the chart of the most valued firms, Reliance Industries retained the highest ranking.

INBRIEF

22ND KISHORE KUMAR MEMORIAL AWARDS

NEW DELHI: Dr. Kamal Pathak, Registrar of IP University was speaking as the chief guest at the inaugural function of 22nd Kishore Kumar Memorial Awards organised by Kishore Kumar Memorial Club at Pyarelal Lal Bhawan.



GNU RELEASED SCHEDULE THROUGH ONLINE PORTAL

AMRITSAR: The online examination form submission and fee payments for Sem-1 December 2024 exams of Law FYIP/TYP, B.Ed, B.A-B.Ed, BSc-B.Ed, B.Com-B.Ed and B.Ed-M.Ed for Regular students through online portal has been scheduled.

GNU ZONAL YOUTH FESTIVAL

AMRITSAR: The three-day Zonal Youth Festival of "B-Zone" of Guru Nanak Dev University began, marked by an impressive inauguration ceremony presided over by Dr. Ravjit Singh from Dr Daljit Singh Eye Hospital, Amritsar.





BREAKING THE CYCLE THE URGENT NEED TO COMBAT ANAEMIA

ANEMIA SYMPTOMS AND CAUSES

SYMPTOMS

- Fatigue
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Shortness of breath
- Headache
- Cold hands, feet
- Irregular heartbeat

CAUSES

- Nutrient deficiencies
- Blood loss
- Health conditions
- Menstrual periods
- Women pregnancy

In a world where health often takes a backseat to the demands of modern life, anaemia has emerged as a silent epidemic writes

ABHI SINGHAL



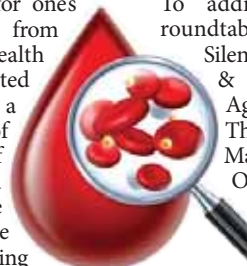
NORMAL

In today's fast-paced world, many individuals struggle to prioritize their health and wellness, particularly those aged 21 to 50. This neglect can lead to significant health issues, including a common yet often overlooked condition: anaemia. Anaemia, characterized by a reduced number of red blood cells or malfunctioning red blood cells, can have serious implications for one's health. The latest statistics from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), conducted from 2019 to 2021, reveal a staggering prevalence of anaemia in India: 57% of women aged 15 to 49 and 25% of men in the same age group are affected. The figures are even more alarming for specific demographics, with 67% of children aged 6 to 59 months, 59% of adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 years, and 52% of pregnant women aged 15 to 49 years being anaemic. Given these statistics, it is imperative to raise awareness and break the cycle of anaemia, particularly among pregnant women who are set to bring new life into the world. The symptoms of anaemia can

significantly impact daily life, including fatigue, weakness, shortness of breath, pale skin, cold extremities, dizziness, rapid heartbeat, and difficulty in concentrating. These symptoms create a vicious cycle: anaemia leads to weakness, which in turn results in laziness and decreased productivity, ultimately affecting one's overall well-being and work output. To address this critical issue, a roundtable discussion titled "India's Silent Epidemic: Raising Awareness & Fostering Urgent Action Against Anaemia" was convened. The panel of experts included Dr Manju Puri, Director Professor of Obstetrics & Gynaecology at Lady Hardinge Medical College, New Delhi; Dr Tulika Seth, Professor of Haematology at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences; Dr Sarath Gopalan, Gastroenterologist and Hepatologist at Madhukar Rainbow Children's Hospital, New Delhi; and Dr William Joe, Assistant Professor at the Population Research Centre, Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi.

The experts identified iron deficiency as the primary cause of anaemia. They

ANAEMIA



NUTRITION ALONE IS INSUFFICIENT. THE GOVERNMENT HAS IMPLEMENTED A SUPPLEMENTARY PROGRAM FOR VULNERABLE GROUPS, PROVIDING LOW-COST SUPPLEMENTS THAT ARE WIDELY AVAILABLE. EVEN WHEN PURCHASED, THEY ARE AFFORDABLE. IT'S IMPORTANT TO VIEW SUPPLEMENTS AS A NECESSARY BACKUP

emphasized that one can have normal haemoglobin levels yet still be iron deficient. This situation is like to an iceberg, where anaemia is merely the visible tip. For instance, a person with a haemoglobin level of 12 could still suffer from iron deficiency. By administering iron supplements, their iron stores may improve, alleviating many symptoms, even if the haemoglobin level changes only slightly.

Dr Tulika Seth highlighted the need for greater awareness regarding iron-rich foods. She noted that even educated individuals often struggle to name two iron-rich foods. "Unless you know about red meat and similar options, you're unlikely to consume sufficient amounts," she remarked.

The discussion also underscored the significance of dietary counselling to enhance iron intake through improved dietary choices, which is essential for health management. Experts stressed that knowledge and awareness are crucial initial steps toward addressing anaemia.

Furthermore, the quantity of nutrient intake was discussed as a pivotal factor. The experts addressed the role of iron supplements, particularly in light of the younger generation's reluctance to

consume leafy vegetables, which are vital for nutrient intake. While supplements can serve as a backup, they cannot replace the benefits derived from natural food sources.

In response to inquiries about nutritional solutions and reliance on supplements, Dr Manju Puri noted, "Nutrition alone is insufficient. The government has implemented a supplementary program for vulnerable groups, providing low-cost supplements that are widely available. Even when purchased, they are affordable. It's important to view supplements as a necessary backup." Awareness remains the first step in combating anaemia.

By understanding the symptoms, causes, and prevention strategies, individuals can take proactive measures to safeguard their health. Incorporating iron-rich foods—such as leafy vegetables, red meat, and fortified cereals—into one's diet is essential, and supplements can provide additional support when needed.

Ultimately, health is one's greatest asset. Individuals are encouraged to prioritize their health by staying informed about anaemia and taking steps to prevent or manage this condition.

"Nourishing Your Body: The Role of Nutrition in Daily Wellness"

BY **Dr Wajiha Mehtab**

In a world filled with fast food, busy schedules, and growing health concerns, the importance of nutrition in our daily lives cannot be overstated. Proper nutrition is the foundation of a healthy body and mind, influencing everything from energy levels to disease prevention. Eating a well-balanced diet is more than just fuelling the body—it's about enhancing overall well-being and leading a vibrant, fulfilling life.

The Building Blocks of Health

At its core, nutrition provides the essential building blocks our bodies need to function. Carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins, and minerals all play crucial roles. Carbohydrates are the body's main source of energy, while proteins help build and repair tissues. Healthy fats, such as those found in nuts, seeds, and fish, support brain health and protect vital organs. Vitamins and minerals, found in abundance in fruits and vegetables, help regulate processes such as metabolism, immune function, and cell repair.

Without these key nutrients, the body struggles to perform its everyday tasks efficiently. Poor nutrition weakens the immune system, slows down healing, and can lead to fatigue, poor concentration, and overall poor health. On the other hand, a diet rich in whole, nutrient-dense foods can optimise energy, mood, and productivity.

Preventing Chronic Disease

One of the most important reasons to prioritize nutrition is its role in preventing chronic diseases. Conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, and obesity are increasingly common, yet many are preventable through better dietary choices. Diets high in processed foods, refined sugars, and unhealthy fats contribute to the development of these diseases, while diets rich in whole grains, lean proteins, fruits, and vegetables offer protection.

The World Health Organization (WHO) stresses that a diet full of fruits and vegetables can reduce the risk of heart

diseases and certain types of cancer. Foods high in fiber, like whole grains and legumes, promote healthy digestion and reduce the risk of gastrointestinal disorders. Meanwhile, cutting down on salt, sugar, and saturated fats helps control blood pressure and maintain a healthy weight.

Mental Health and Nutrition

The link between nutrition and physical health is well-documented, but its impact on mental health is equally significant. Nutrients such as omega-3 fatty acids, found in fish and flaxseeds, and



antioxidants in fruits and vegetables, support brain function and mood regulation. Studies show that a diet rich in these nutrients may reduce the risk of depression and anxiety while improving memory and cognitive function.

Conversely, diets high in processed and sugary foods are linked to higher rates of mood disorders. Blood sugar spikes and crashes, caused by refined sugars and simple carbohydrates, can lead to irritability, fatigue, and feelings of anxiety. By maintaining a balanced diet, people can stabilize their energy levels and emotional health.

Fuelling Daily Energy

The food we eat directly impacts how we feel throughout the day. A balanced meal

gives the body a steady supply of energy, while junk food leads to quick energy crashes. Eating a variety of nutrient-rich foods ensures that the body has everything it needs to keep going strong. Complex carbohydrates, such as brown rice and sweet potatoes, provide long-lasting energy. Proteins and healthy fats offer sustained energy release, keeping us feeling full and energised for longer periods. Vitamins and minerals also play a role, helping the body efficiently convert food into energy.

Practical Tips for a Healthier Diet

Maintaining a nutritious diet doesn't have to be complicated. Simple, mindful choices can make a big difference. Here are a few tips:

Focus on whole foods: Prioritize fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats. Limit processed and packaged foods.

Eat the rainbow: Aim to include a variety of colours on your plate. Different coloured fruits and vegetables provide a wide range of vitamins and minerals.

Stay hydrated: Water is essential for nearly every function in the body. Make sure to drink enough water throughout the day.

Watch portion sizes: It's not just what you eat, but how much. Be mindful of portion sizes to avoid overeating, even with healthy foods.

Plan ahead: Planning meals and snacks in advance can help you make healthier choices and avoid unhealthy last-minute options.

Nutrition is a cornerstone of health and wellness. By choosing nutrient-dense, whole foods and avoiding processed alternatives, individuals can significantly improve both their physical and mental health. Good nutrition doesn't just fuel the body—it fuels life, empowering us to live more energetic, fulfilling, and disease-free lives. Prioritising what goes on your plate is one of the most impactful decisions you can make for your long-term well-being.

The author is MSc, PhD, Consultant Nutritionist and Founder & Director, Artisan Academy of Advanced Clinical Nutrition.

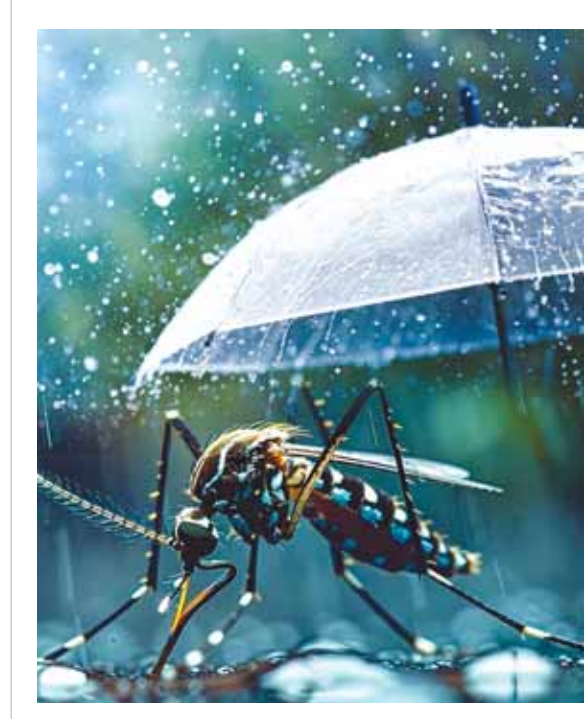
Keeping Fit and Well during the Monsoon Season

BY **Dr Dinesh Kumar Tyagi**

Monsoon is the season that brings a necessary cool to the weather after the scorching summers. Although the weather becomes extremely pleasant, monsoons also open the gate to a plethora of waterborne and viral diseases and infections. The stagnant pools of water the puddles are breeding grounds for germs and bacteria and the humidity becomes another ally of viral infections. Let's discover some tips and habits that can help you avoid monsoon diseases. A healthy gut ensures a good immune system. It is important to maintain a nutritious diet in all your meals ensuring that you are getting the fats, minerals, and vitamins you need. Eat seasonal fruits and vegetables and avoid oily spicy food that could meddle with your digestion.

Food made at restaurants, streets, or cafe's are usually made in unhygienic conditions. Food made in unhygienic conditions can lead to typhoid, infections as it carries various germs and bacteria. Try to eat home-cooked meals as much as possible and even if you eat out, eat freshly prepared food that is served hygienically to you. Waterborne diseases are very common during the monsoons. Drinking unsafe or impure water from public water coolers can lead you to catch them. Drink safe water from RO or try to get bottled water when you are out and about.

Damp clothes can cause skin infections and even lead to allergies. Wearing dry, clean clothing during rainy seasons is very important. Go for Synthetic, quick-



drying materials as they won't stay damp for long and don't retain moisture like cotton or linen. They help you stay dry and comfortable and get drenched in rain like kids. This may seem refreshing but it can lead you to catching cold, fever, and other waterborne diseases, especially during the peak monsoon season downpours. Keeping your umbrella and raincoat handy while going out during monsoons is a power move. It is an easy and effective way of keeping you from getting drenched in the rain and will protect you from exposure of the rain and the atmosphere that weakens your immunity. Viral infections are rampant during monsoon season due to the weather and humidity. Close contact in crowded places during this season should be avoided as that is where you will catch an

infection like swine flu or hepatitis. While monsoons will come and go, life goes on and you will have to go out and interact with people at offices or public spaces or even crowds. All you can do is maintain a good amount of space between you and others to avoid the risk of catching any infections. Make sure you are up to date about getting all your vaccines and booster doses. Outbreak diseases like hepatitis are very common during monsoons. Consult your doctor and make sure that you are not behind on getting your vaccines. Infections through insects like malaria and dengue are rampant during the monsoons. It is important to protect yourself from such diseases. Get a mosquito repellent that you can use in areas where there are a lot of stagnant bodies and

mosquitoes. You can also use nets at night to prevent mosquito bites.

Germs, bacteria, and insects including mosquitoes all have one hotspot during winter that is stagnant water. You should avoid going to water-logged areas during monsoons to avoid all such bacteria and germs and make sure to disinfect yourself properly after you have been through those areas.

It becomes important to cover your full body during monsoons to prevent mosquito bites or fungal infections of any kind. Stick to wearing full-length skirts, t-shirts, and pants to avoid any such issues.

Sunlight, although is very important for us for Vitamin D, during the rainy season the sunlight can weaken your immunity. The combination of sun and humidity after a rain shower can lead to dehydration. Wear shades, apply sunscreen, and try to stay in shaded areas during monsoons as much as possible.

Good sleep is very important for your immune system. Good sleep regenerates your body cells and keeps you body healthy. To avoid catching any viral fevers or infections you should maintain a good sleep cycle. Staying healthy, and maintaining good habits is the crux to staying away from all kinds of fevers, infections, and flu during monsoons. Some habits should be well inculcated like wearing dry clothes and maintaining a safe distance from crowds during the monsoons to stay healthy and safe.

The author is the Additional Director of Internal Medicine at Fortis Hospital, Greater Noida.

Sri Lanka crushes New Zealand to clinch historic series win

AP ■ GALLE (SRI LANKA)

Sri Lanka stormed to a series victory over New Zealand, securing the two-match test series with a resounding innings and 154-run triumph on the fourth day in Galle on Sunday. This victory, Sri Lanka's most dominant over the Kiwis, also marks their first win against New Zealand in 15 years. The hero of the games, left-arm spinner Prabhath Jayasuriya, was named Player of the Series after a masterful performance, claiming 18 wickets across the two matches. Meanwhile, Kamindu Mendis took home Man of the Match honours for his unbeaten 182, anchoring Sri Lanka's colossal total of 602-5 declared. With this knock, Mendis etched his name in history, joining the great Sir Don Bradman as the third joint-fastest player to reach 1,000 test runs. Jayasuriya, who took nine wickets in the first test, was at his best again, snaring



another nine wickets in the second test as New Zealand's batters struggled to cope with Sri Lanka's spin-heavy attack. Debutant Nishan Peiris was the perfect foil, chipping in with nine wickets of his own, including a five-wicket haul in the second innings. "We discussed the need to score big in the first innings. That has been something that has been worrying us for a while. Glad we rectified that this innings," said Sri Lanka captain Dananjaya de Silva. "The spinners were superb. They kept creating pressure and didn't allow New Zealand to get away with things. It was

a superb display. That's how we want to compete in home conditions, dominate the opposition from ball one," he added. New Zealand's woes began early, bundled out for a paltry 88 in their first innings. Forced to follow on, the Kiwis showed more fight in their second innings, posting 360 - their highest total of the tour and in Galle - but it was too little, too late. Tom Blundell, Glenn Phillips and Mitchell Santner all contributed half-centuries in the second innings, but the tourists needed far more to challenge Sri Lanka's

dominance. Resuming at 199-5, New Zealand lost three wickets before lunch on the fourth day. Despite Sri Lanka's fielding lapses, which saw three catches dropped, they eventually cleaned up after lunch. Jayasuriya removed Ajaz Patel and Peiris took the final scalp of Santner, stumped by Kusal Mendis, sealing the series win for Sri Lanka. "We had our moments in the series, but disappointed with the end result," said New Zealand captain Tim Southee. "That morning session on day three when we lost nine wickets was very disappointing. There were dropped catches and missed stumpings as well in the Sri Lankan innings and in these conditions when you don't hold onto those chances it is very difficult." With this victory, Sri Lanka has now won three consecutive test matches and bolstered their hopes of qualifying for the ICC World Test Championship final at Lord's next June.

Indian shooters win two gold medals in Peru

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian shooters began their ISSF Junior World Championship (Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun) campaign in Peru on a good note, winning team gold in men's and women's 10m air pistol events, though a potential top-podium finish was lost in the individual category after a marksman was docked two points for reporting late for the final. The junior men's trio of Umesh Choudhary, Pradyum Singh and Mukesh Nelavalli topped the men's team competition in 10m air pistol with a tally of 1726 points. They finished 10 points ahead of second-placed Romania, while Italy took bronze with a score of 1707. Choudhary though missed a potential individual gold after being penalised two points for reporting late for the final. Choudhary and Singh had earlier made it to the individual finals placed third and fourth respectively in the qualification round. Choudhary shot 580 and



Singh 578 but missed out on individual medals, ending up sixth and eighth respectively. Luca Joldea of Romania won the gold medal, while Chinese Taipei's Hsieh Hsiang-Chen clinched the silver. Nelavalli was ninth in qualification with a score of 574. The combination of Kanishka Dagar, Lakshita and Anjali Chaudhary tallied 1708 to clinch the junior women's 10m air pistol team gold. They

pipped Azerbaijan by a point and bronze-winning Ukraine by four points. Dagar also made the individual final in third place with a score of 573 along with Kanak who also shot the same score but with lesser inner 10s, to bag the fifth qualifying spot. In the final, Kanak won bronze with a score of 217.6, while Dagar finished eighth. Chinese Taipei's Chen Yu-Chun won gold, while Slovakia's Manja Slak bagged the silver.

Wet outfield wipes out play for second day

PTI ■ KANPUR

No play was possible for the second consecutive day in the second test between India and Bangladesh due to a wet outfield at the Green Park Stadium here. Overnight rain had caused a delay to the start of action but even as the sun was shining bright around 2:00pm and there were no soggy patches on the ground, the officials decided to call off the play. Almost eight sessions have been lost in the game due to persistent rain that has played havoc with the final match of the two-game series. Questions on the drainage system used at the venue have been duly raised. Bangladesh had ended the rain-shortened opening day at 107 for 3. The entire second day was washed out without a ball being bowled, and only 35 overs were bowled on the opening day. India pacer Akash Deep (2/34) and Ravichandran Ashwin (1/22) were among the wickets.

Champions League returns missing Mbappé, Rodri, Barella as injury wave hits European soccer

AP ■ PARIS

Key players will be sidelined when the Champions League resumes on Tuesday after a wave of injuries within a week of the new-look competition starting. Kylian Mbappé's sore hamstring is likely to sideline him beyond Wednesday when he was due to return to France with defending champion Real Madrid to face Lille. Serious knee injuries mean Manchester City midfielder Rodri is out for the season and Barcelona goalkeeper Marc-André ter Stegen will miss at least most of it. Inter Milan midfielder Nicolò Barella, who was a standout playing against Rodri on September 18, will miss at least one Champions League game because of a thigh strain. The injuries to four players who were involved at the European Championship into the knockout phase have sharpened the debate about player workload in a calendar made more congested by the bigger Champions League.

The extended program is what influential clubs all-but forced UEFA to create and the 18 games this week, split between Tuesday and Wednesday, still leaves each of them with six more to play through January. Another final rematch There were two repeats of past finals in the first week of games that relaunched the Champions League in a single-standings format. Man City and Inter drew 0-0 and Liverpool won 3-1 at AC Milan. The next rematch comes Wednesday when Aston Villa hosts Bayern Munich, a giant of the European Cup era that was shocked 1-0 in the 1982 final. Villa Park will host a first game in the competition since March 1983 when the English side's title defense was ended by Juventus. Both eased to winning starts two weeks ago. Villa won 3-0 at Young Boys and Bayern's nine goals against Dinamo Zagreb was a record for any team in the 33-season Champions League era. Harry Kane scored four in Bayern's 9-2 win and has a good record visiting Villa, with five goals there in five Premier League games for Tottenham. He faces a late check on an ankle injury. Kane edges Haaland Kane's fast start to the season with 10 goals in seven games for Bayern has outpaced even Erling Haaland's 10 in eight games for Man City. Haaland was kept quiet by Inter for the



second time in 16 months, a fact he was reminded of in a post-game talk with the Italian champion's center back Francesco Acerbi, who smiled and held up two fingers. Haaland should find it easier on

Tuesday in Slovakia when Man City faces Slovan Bratislava, which took the second biggest beating in the opening round, 5-1 at Celtic. Crowd size and fan fervour The pulsating atmosphere at Celtic Park

for a rare European win by the Scottish champion stood out in an opening week where anticipation was not universal. Pundits including former Man City goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel noted a quietness about the stadium for the Inter game. The attendance was nearly 2,000 higher five days later when Man City met Arsenal in a tempestuous Premier League clash where title ambitions were already in play. Milan-Liverpool was a heavyweight European fixture yet far from sold out, with fewer than 60,000 at San Siro. The crowd topped 70,000 at each of Milan's first two Serie A home games this season, and 66,000 on the equivalent Champions League opening night last season to see another English club, Newcastle. Paris Saint-Germain drew at least 46,000 fans for each home game in Ligue 1 this season - and all three Champions League group-stage games last season - yet fewer than 40,000 were at Parc des Princes to see European debutant Girona two weeks ago. Sporting Lisbon also had 40,000 fans for a Champions League opener against Lille that was 6,000 down on the crowd for a domestic league game against Porto. The attendance and atmosphere trends

will be watched as fans respond to the longer and more expensive program of four Champions League home games. The 36-team standings is set to be more dynamic for the final two rounds in January. Tuesday's games The raucous atmosphere should follow Celtic to Borussia Dortmund whose fans in the Yellow Wall tribune are among the noisiest in Europe. Bundesliga champion Bayer Leverkusen hosts Milan after making a fast start in a 4-0 rout at Feyenoord. San Siro now reverts to Inter to host Red Star Belgrade. Arsenal hosts PSG in a meeting of two teams chasing a trophy they never won. Each was a beaten finalist once. Also, Barcelona hosts Young Boys. Wednesday's games Even without Mbappé, Madrid should have too much for Lille playing in the stadium that hosted basketball group-stage games at the Paris Olympics. Premier League leader Liverpool hosts Bologna, and Girona's first European visitor to the Montilivi stadium is Feyenoord. Dinamo Zagreb fired its coach, Sergej Jakirovic, after the drubbing at Bayern and brought back Nenad Bjelica for a second spell.

Osasuna stuns Barcelona 4-2 record for best start



AP ■ BARCELONA

Ryan Zaragoza scored one goal and set up another to spark Osasuna's stunning 4-2 win over Barcelona, dealing the Spanish league leader its first loss.

The lightning-fast forward on loan from Bayern Munich crossed for Ante Budimir to open the scoring in the 17th minute. Zaragoza then showed some fancy high-speed dribbling to round goalkeeper Iñaki Peña on the break for 2-0 in the 28th on Saturday. Barcelona youth player Pau Victor pulled one back for the visitors in the 53rd, but Budimir earned and converted a penalty to put the result beyond doubt in the 72nd. Abel Bretones made it 4-1 in the 85th and substitute Lamine Yamal scored Barcelona's second goal. Barcelona recorded wins in the first seven rounds of the league. An eighth victory would have equaled a club record established in 2013. Barcelona remained atop the league standings at four points ahead of Real Madrid before the defending champion visits Atletico Madrid in a derby on Sunday. Osasuna moved into sixth place and stayed unbeaten in Pamplona in this campaign with four wins and a draw.

India U17 look to maintain dominance against Bangladesh in final

PTI ■ THIMPHU

India will fancy their chances of maintaining their stranglehold on Bangladesh when the two sides meet in the final of the SAFF U17 Championship here on Monday. India began their tournament nine days ago with a last-gasp 1-0 victory over Bangladesh in the group stage. The same script unfolded last year as well, when the India U16 boys beat their eastern neighbours 1-0 in the first game and then 2-0 in the final. Head coach Ishfaq Ahmed and his boys will hope for a repeat of that on Monday for a successful title defence. For the record, the two teams have met four times in the finals of SAFF men's age-group tournaments, with India winning thrice (U18 in



2019, U20 in 2022 and U16 in 2023) and Bangladesh emerging victorious once (U16 in 2015). "We know Bangladesh are a good side. They did well to come from behind in the

semi-final. They had some hiccups but they've been more stable as compared to the other teams. Our win against them is in the past. A final is a different game," said Ahmed in the pre-match

press conference. India beat Nepal 4-2 in a frenetic semi-final on Saturday, which saw four goals scored in the last 10 minutes. Vishal Yadav's second-half

brace put India in control but Nepal didn't go down easily as they kept reducing the Blue Colts' lead. In the end, goals from substitutes Ningthoukhongjam Rishi Singh and Hemenchung Lunkim sealed the Indian win. Set-pieces are something India have been excellent with so far. They've scored four goals from dead ball situations so far and Ahmed has been delighted with that. In the second semi-final, Bangladesh showed indomitable spirit as they came from two goals down to level it at 2-2 against Pakistan thanks to Md Manik's 74th and 94th minute goals. They then converted all eight of their penalties to cap off a memorable comeback and enter the final.

Messi scores, Inter Miami moves closer to No. 1 seed with 1-1 draw

AP ■ FORT LAUDERDALE (US)

Lionel Messi moved Inter Miami another step closer to the No. 1 seed for the MLS Cup playoffs. And the MLS single-season points record remains in the club's reach as well. Messi scored in the 67th minute and Inter Miami pushed its unbeaten streak to eight straight Major League Soccer matches with a 1-1 tie against Charlotte FC on Saturday night. It was Messi's 15th goal in 16 league

matches this season. Messi became the sixth player in MLS history with at least 15 goals and 15 assists in a single season - and he's done that while missing 15 of Inter Miami's league contests. The tie, combined with Columbus' 2-2 draw with D.C. United on Saturday, left Inter Miami eight points clear of the Crew for the No. 1 seed in the Eastern Conference. Inter Miami is also seven points up on the LA Galaxy for the No. 1 overall seed in the MLS playoffs.

Inter Miami plays at Columbus on Wednesday, and a win would wrap up the No. 1 overall seed - not just the East, but the Supporters Shield as the regular-season winners as well. Inter Miami (19-4-8) has 65 points with three matches left; Columbus (16-5-9) has 57 points with four matches remaining. "We are playing a great team that is chasing us in the Supporters Shield," Inter Miami coach Gerardo "Tata" Martino said.



"It is a very important game but so are the games against Toronto and New England. We will be ready for these remaining dates." But first, the Columbus match looms and Inter Miami knows exactly what's at stake. "It's very important," defender Jordi Alba said. The Supporters Shield would give Inter Miami home-field edge throughout the playoffs, including for a potential MLS Cup final December 7. And if Inter Miami wins out, it will

finish with 74 points - one more than the MLS record of 73 set by New England in 2021. DC United helped Inter Miami a bit on Saturday. Columbus led 2-1 late in the second half but surrendered the tying goal in the 81st minute; otherwise, the Crew could have been two points closer to Inter Miami in the standings and made Wednesday's match far more interesting. Messi's goal was his typical brilliance. He took a pass near the top of the

penalty box, dribbling once and threading his natural left-footed shot between four defenders and into the net to tie the match. It came 10 minutes after Charlotte (11-11-9, 42 points, seventh in the East) struck first, with Karol Swiderski deflecting a shot into the net. But Messi answered, and Inter Miami settled for its third consecutive draw. The team is 5-0-3 in its last eight league matches and 9-1-3 in MLS play since June 1.

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