

Mahatma Gandhi saw ray of hope in J&K during difficult times: LG Sinha

Modi govt working tirelessly to fulfill Gandhiji's dream of 'Viksit Bharat'

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Oct 02: Asserting that Mahatma Gandhi saw ray of hope in J&K during difficult times, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday said that Bapu's vision of peace and prosperity should serve as a guiding light for the youth and the people of the Union Territory.

Speaking at the UT-level function here organized by the Department of School Education and Department of Culture, the Lt Governor, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "Gandhi Ji's principles remain a source of inspiration for humanity and must be inculcated in the younger generation."

Paying rich tributes to Mahatma Gandhi on his 156th birth anniversary he called on people to embrace the timeless ideals of truth, non-violence, tolerance, and compassion to address contemporary global challenges.



"Gandhiji wanted to see peace and prosperity in J&K," LG said, adding, "He (Gandhiji) had said that he sees a ray of hope in this land. I pray that J&K emerges as a shining star to show the light to the entire country in these difficult times (1947 partition era)."

He urged the youth of J&K to make Gandhian ideals the basis of their lives and contribute

actively to the welfare of society. "Our young generation must realize that Bapu's J&K is one of peace and prosperity, and they have a responsibility to shape it with their energy and dedication," he said.

Highlighting the government's commitment to Gandhiji's philosophy, LG Sinha said that under the leadership of Prime Minister

Narendra Modi, the regime is working tirelessly to fulfill the Mahatma's dream of a "Viksit Bharat."

He stressed the importance of embracing the concept of swadeshi to promote self-reliance and economic growth in the Union Territory. "The J&K government has been promoting Bapu's vision of swadeshi by setting up domestic

industries. On this occasion of Gandhi Jayanti, I appeal to everyone—let us adopt swadeshi in our lives," the Lieutenant Governor added.

He urged people to promote and purchase products made by Self Help Groups and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). "Remember your roots and the ageless spirit of India as you chart the future course. Society and nature must exist in harmony. We must focus on Research & Development while ensuring that agriculture, industry, and service sectors work in unison for a prosperous economy," he said.

LG Sinha said, "We live in a time when global challenges threaten to undermine peace and stability. We must follow the ideals of Bapu to address contemporary challenges."

Highlighting Gandhiji's vision of Sewa (selfless service) and Kartavya (duties), the Lt Governor said these values will continue to guide India's journey towards becoming a Viksit Bharat. | [More on P6](#)

'Operation Sindoor' victory against Ravana of terrorism: President Murmu

Salutes Indian armed forces for giving befitting reply to terrorists, sponsors



Sajid Raina

New Delhi, Oct 02: Terming 'Operation Sindoor' as a victory against the Ravana of terrorism, President Droupadi Murmu on Thursday praised the Indian armed forces for giving a befitting reply to terrorists and their sponsors sitting across the border.

Addressing the Dussehra celebrations at the Red Fort here, President Murmu, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "The Operation Sindoor carried out by our armed forces' represents a decisive victory over the Ravana of terrorism."

She said, "When terrorism

strikes against humanity, it becomes necessary to counter it. Operation Sindoor is a mark of victory against the Ravana of terrorism, and we salute our soldiers for this."

Pertinently, the 'Operation Sindoor' was launched against terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan on May 7 this year. It was a response to the April 22 Pahalgalam terror attack, which left 26 civilians, mostly tourists, dead. The Indian armed forces destroyed nine terror headquarters deep inside Pakistan and PoK which led to the clashes between the two countries.

The skirmishes continued for 4-days and | [More on P6](#)

3-day wet spell likely from tomorrow

Snowfall expected in higher reaches

Owais Gul

Srinagar, Oct 02: Under the influence of a strong western disturbance, Jammu and Kashmir is likely to receive a three-day wet spell from Saturday evening, while the higher reaches of the region are expected to experience the season's first snowfall.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a weather advisory, forecasting a strong western disturbance, expected to impact Jammu and Kashmir and adjoining areas from October 4 (Saturday).

The Meteorological Centre in Rambagh, Srinagar, in its advisory, accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said the system is likely to bring widespread light to moderate rainfall and snowfall, particularly over the higher reaches of the Union Territory.



The peak of this weather activity is expected between the night of October 5 and the morning of October 7, the advisory reads.

Under the influence of this active weather system, moderate to heavy snowfall is likely in several high-altitude regions, including Anantnag-Pahalgalam, Kulgam, Sinthan Pass, Shopian, Pir Ki Gali, Sonamarg-Zojila, Bandipora-Razdan Pass, Gulmarg, and the Kupwara-Sadhma Pass. | [More on P6](#)

Kashmir to receive first automobile rake via Railways today

Naveed Ul Haq Ganaiee

Srinagar, Oct 02: The Kashmir Valley is set to receive its first automobile rake as northern railway's Jammu Division has dispatched a train from Maruti Suzuki India Limited's in-plant Gati Shakti Terminal (GCT) in Manesar to Anantnag Goods Shed, officials said.

An official told news

agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the train, carrying over 116 Maruti Suzuki vehicles departed from Manesar at 12:35 am and is scheduled to reach the newly opened Anantnag terminal tomorrow after covering 850 km in 45 hours.

He said the rake is expected to mark a new chapter in the logistics sector | [More on P6](#)

Forces prepared at borders, retaliation will be decisive if provoked: Rajnath

» 'Op Sindoor proved India's ability to strike at will' » Any aggression by Pak in Sir Creek will invite strong response'

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Oct 02: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday said India will respond more aggressively to any misadventure by Pakistan, whether along the International Border or the Line of Control. He said the nation knows how to defend itself against terrorism and other threats.

Singh further said that any aggression by Pakistan in the Sir Creek region would be met with a response strong enough to "change both history and geography."

Speaking during Shastra Puja celebrations with soldiers at a military base in Bhuj, Gujarat, the Defence Minister, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), warned Islamabad against misadventures in the disputed border area, saying India is watching all recent military developments near the Sir Creek zone closely.

"Even after 78 years of independence, the Sir Creek border issue remains unresolved. India has tried to settle it through dialogue, but Pakistan's intentions are unclear. If they try any misadventure now, the response will be so strong that it could change both history and



geography," he said.

Referring to the 1965 war, Singh reminded Pakistan of the Indian Army's past achievements. "In 1965, our forces reached Lahore. In 2025, they must remember — one direct route to Karachi passes through Sir Creek," he said.

Sir Creek, a 96-kilometre-long estuary in the marshy Rann of Kutch, has been a longstanding territorial dispute between India and Pakistan. India accuses Pakistan of trying to militarise the region, especially with recent reports of expanded military infrastructure near the sensitive area.

Rajnath said the Indian Army and the Border Security Force are fully alert and monitoring all activities along the border. "Our soldiers are guarding the borders with

complete vigilance. Let there be no doubt — if provoked, the response will be restrained," he said.

He also spoke at length about Operation Sindoor, a four-day military action launched by India from May 7 to May 10, 2025, in retaliation to the terror attack in Pahalgalam. The operation targeted terrorist camps inside Pakistan-controlled territory.

"Pakistan attempted to breach our defence system from Leh to Sir Creek. They failed. In response, our forces exposed their entire air defence network. We sent a clear message to the world, India can strike where and when it wants," he said.

The Defence Minister clarified that the aim of Operation Sindoor was not to escalate | [More on P6](#)

Who will be NC's candidate for Budgam by-election?

'Aga Ruhullah not part of discussions yet on candidature'

KNO Special Correspondent

Srinagar, Oct 02: As the Election Commission of India is all set to announce the schedule for the Budgam by-election, all eyes are on who will be the National Conference's candidate for the prestigious Central Kashmir seat.

Sources told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the National Conference is considering a few names, but Chief Minister

Omar Abdullah's trusted lieutenant and advisor, Nasir Aslam Wani, is the frontrunner for the ticket. "Nasir Aslam Wani would be the candidate if other NC leaders from Budgam are on board," they said, adding that the internal dynamics of the party in Budgam remain fluid.

Sitting MP Aga Ruhullah Mehdi, who has locked horns with the party leadership over issues ranging from Article 370 to reservation rationalisation, is not yet part of | [More on P6](#)

BRO scripts history in Ladakh

Surpasses own Guinness World Record for highest motorable road

PTI

Leh, Oct 02: The Border Roads Organisation's 'Project Himank' has once again created history by surpassing its own Guinness World Record for the highest motorable road.

The team successfully reached Mig La Pass at an altitude of 19,400 feet on Likarumig La-Fukche road alignment in Leh district, overtaking the previous record set at Umling La (19,024 feet), the BRO said in a statement here.

The milestone, it said, was achieved on Wednesday when the BRO team led by Chief



Engineer of Project Himank Brig Vishal Srivastava reached Mig La Pass, proudly hoisting the National and BRO flags at this unparalleled height.

The connectivity from Likarumig La pass and further to Fukche village | [More on P6](#)

Police attach property of terrorist handler

KNO

Handwara, Oct 02: In a series of actions against the terrorist ecosystem, J&K Police Thursday said to have attached the property of a terrorist handler in Palpora village of Kralgund.

During the course of investigation in case FIR No 73/2011 of Police Station Kralgund, it was established that a JKNOP Nazir Ahmad Ganai son of Ab, Kabir Ganie, resident of Palpora in Kralgund A/P PoK, is operating from PoK and is actively involved in guiding and handling terrorist activities in Handwara, a police spokesman said in a statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO).



Accordingly, police said that as per the provision of law, proceedings to attach his property were initiated in the said case and after obtaining necessary legal sanctions from the competent authority, land belonging to the said | [More on P6](#)

Master artisan of hanging carpets

Srinagar's Shabir Beigh keeps rare craft alive for 40 years

'Fading interest among youth puts this unique art at risk of extinction'

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Oct 02: In the narrow lanes of Amdakadal, Mohalla Gotpora in Srinagar lives 50-year-old Shabir Ahmed Beigh, a master artisan who has spent more than four decades preserving a rare form of Kashmiri craft — weaving hanging carpets with portraits of personalities.

Unlike traditional carpets meant for the floor, Beigh's creations are designed for



Jahangir Shah (KNO/KT)

walls, celebrated for their artistry and detail.

Beigh vividly remembers how his fascination with the craft began. "I learned this art from a neighbour during my childhood. It took me almost eight years to master it fully. In the early days, I worked for as little as 50 paise a day," he told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) with a smile.

Over the years, Beigh's work has won admiration

both locally and internationally. His carpet pieces, some portraying iconic figures, have found homes across the world. "Wherever they go, people admire them. Those I worked with never wanted me to leave because of the precision of my work. This art is sacred to me, which is why I never allow anyone to interfere with my pieces," he said.

However, Beigh laments the waning interest in this painstaking | [More on P6](#)

Ensure no affected household is left out: Sakeena

Visits fire-affected families in Langkhull Nandimarg



KT NEWS DESK

KULGAM, OCTOBER 02: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo Thursday visited Langkhull Nandimarg area of Kulgam district and distributed relief cheques among fire-affected families.

During the visit, the Minister interacted with the affected families, expressed her solidarity with them and assured them of every possible support from the Government. She personally distributed relief cheques among the victims as an immediate measure of assistance.

The Minister emphasized that the

administration has been directed to ensure swift rehabilitation and timely relief measures so that the affected families are able to rebuild their lives at the earliest. She further stated that necessary steps will be taken to extend both short-term and long-term support, including assistance under various government schemes.

The Minister reiterated that the welfare of the people, especially those facing sudden calamities, remains a top priority of the Omar Abdullah led Government. She also directed the concerned officials to expedite the process of damage assessment and ensure that no affected household is left out of the relief ambit.

Rana advocates for protecting, promoting tribal values

KT NEWS DESK

MENDHAR, OCTOBER 02: Minister for Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana Thursday underscored the urgent need for collective and sustained efforts to preserve, protect and promote the tribal values that have long defined the identity of communities in the Pir Panjal region.

Speaking at a vibrant Tribal Mela organized by the Tribal Affairs Department in collaboration with the local District Administration at Sagra in Mendhar, Poonch, the Minister emphasized that tribal development must not come at the cost of cultural erosion. He called for



an integrative approach that harmonizes progress with tradition, cautioning that the unchecked spread of modern influences could dilute the deep-rooted tribal customs and moral frameworks that are inherently community-driven and inclusive. The Minister

reiterated Omar Abdullah Government's commitment to fostering a development paradigm that is inclusive, respectful of tribal traditions and capable of building a resilient and self-reliant tribal society.

He lauded the efforts of the Tribal Affairs

department and District administration in organizing the Mela, calling it a meaningful step towards engaging with people and development with dignity.

The Mela, which drew significant participation from the local populace, served as a celebration of tribal life, customs and wisdom. It provided a platform to showcase the rich cultural heritage of the Tribals, featuring traditional tribal food that reflects the culinary diversity of indigenous communities.

In addition, local medicinal plants were exhibited, highlighting the traditional knowledge systems that

continue to play a crucial role in rural healthcare practices.

A free medical camp was also organized, providing health consultations and services to the public. The event not only reinforced the importance of cultural continuity but also reflected the Government's resolve to ensure that development policies remain rooted in the lived realities of tribal societies.

Chairperson, District Development Council Poonch, Tazeem Akhtar; Deputy Commissioner Poonch, Ashok Kumar Sharma; senior officers of district administration and a large number of locals were present on the occasion.

DC Sgr participates in Dussehra celebrations

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR OCTOBER 02: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, Thursday participated in the Dussehra celebrations organized by 28th Battalion of CRPF held at premises of DC Office Complex.

On the occasion, the DC extended his warm greetings and best wishes to the people and CRPF jawans of the 28th Battalion deployed at Amar Niwas Complex.

Highlighting the significance of Dussehra, he underscored the values of righteousness, victory of good over evil and respect for all. He further emphasized the importance of unity, communal harmony, and the adoption of ethical practices in both personal and public life.



Shopian admin marks Gandhi Jayanti with multiple progs

DC leads pledge for drug-free, clean, responsible society

KT NEWS DESK

SHOPIAN, OCTOBER, 2: The District Administration Shopian Thursday organized a series of public service and community engagement programmes at Borihallan, Shopian, in connection with the celebration of Gandhi Jayanti and the culmination of Sewa Parv in the district.

Besides, Deputy Commissioner, Shopian, Shishir Gupta, the events were attended by SSP Shopian Anayat Ali, ADDC Dr. Nasir Ahmed Lone, ADC Dr. Zakir Hussain FaaZ and officers of district administration. The event also witnessed active participation of officers, officials, civil society members, students and the public.

Speaking on the occasion, DC emphasised on combating the drug menace under the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan, terming it a grave challenge for the youth and society. He appreciated



the stakeholders for their strong actions against drug menace and called for community-level vigilance and cooperation to eradicate substance abuse. He further highlighted that Swachhta and community-oriented programmes not only help in creating a cleaner environment but also build stronger bonds between the Administration and the people. DC

also inspected departmental facilitation counters and grievance redressal camps where citizens interacted directly with officers for on-the-spot resolution of issues related to basic services, schemes, and developmental works.

A pledge ceremony was also held wherein participants reaffirmed their commitment towards

keeping surroundings neat, clean, plastic-free, and upholding Gandhian values of simplicity, service, and community responsibility.

The fortnight-long Sewa Parv dedicated to cleanliness drives, awareness rallies, pledge ceremonies, plantation drives, and welfare activities across Shopian culminated with this event.

To mark the occasion, cultural programmes and thematic skits on Cleanliness and Drug Abuse were presented by DIPR Shopian and Cultural Unit DIPR Kashmir alongwith performances of school children, showcasing themes of patriotism, cleanliness, and drug-free living.

The event blended the spirit of Gandhi Jayanti, Swachhta, Anti-Drug Awareness and community service, reinforcing the message of collective responsibility and responsive governance in Shopian district.

SMC organises “Sewa Parv 2025” culmination event



KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR OCTOBER 02: The Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) today concluded Sewa Parv 2025 with a grand culmination ceremony at the scenic Jhelum River Front Rajbagh, a vibrant public space along the Jhelum.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation of citizens, officials, self-help groups, and community organizations who played a vital role throughout the fortnight-long civic campaign.

During the past two weeks, SMC carried out a diverse set of initiatives reflecting its vision of building a cleaner, greener, and more sustainable Srinagar. These activities included plantation drives across different parts of the city, large-scale sanitation and cleanliness campaigns, awareness programmes on waste segregation and solid waste management, awareness camps under housing schemes, streetlight repair and maintenance drives besides special sanitation operations in all wards of Srinagar.

These efforts drew massive participation

from residents, students, civil society groups, and local communities, highlighting a shared sense of civic responsibility and collective ownership. Speaking on the occasion, Nuzhat Qureshi, Joint Commissioner (Administration), SMC, expressed gratitude to the people of Srinagar for their wholehearted support and active involvement.

She stated that “Sewa Parv has reinforced our belief that civic responsibility is a shared duty. The collective efforts of our people have not only beautified the city but also strengthened the sense of belonging and ownership among residents. Such initiatives prove that positive change is possible when the community and administration work hand in hand.”

The culmination event at River Front Rajbagh was marked by a felicitation ceremony recognizing the contributions of ward officers, frontline sanitation staff, and community groups. The programme also featured cultural performances, thematic exhibitions, and displays showcasing the journey, milestones, and achievements of Sewa Parv 2025.

Sewa Parv Agriculture Deptt Kashmir organizes swachitha pledge, rally

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 02: As part of the nationwide Sewa Parv initiative, the Directorate of Agriculture Kashmir organized a Swachitha pledge ceremony and rally at Lal Mandi, Srinagar.

Speaking at the occasion, Director Agriculture Kashmir, Sartaj Ahmad Shah, underscored the department's commitment to promoting cleanliness and community service.

Dir Shah administered the Swachitha pledge to the staff and led a vibrant rally through the various offices within the Lal Mandi agriculture complex. The event saw enthusiastic participation from the entire staff, including the Chief Agriculture Office, Srinagar

and other senior officials.

Highlighting the significance of Sewa Parv, Director Shah said, “This initiative is a powerful reminder of our collective responsibility to foster a cleaner and healthier environment. Sewa Parv inspires us to contribute to society through voluntary acts of service, aligning with the vision of a Swachh Bharat.”

The Swachitha pledge and rally are part of a broader series of activities across the Kashmir division, with similar events held in other districts to promote sanitation awareness.

The Directorate plans to extend these efforts to its field offices, ensuring sustained momentum in cleanliness and community engagement initiatives.

DLSA Budgam organises swachhta prog

KT NEWS DESK

BUDGAM, OCTOBER 02: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Budgam organized an awareness programme and a cleanliness drive in district court Complex Budgam in order to mark Gandhi Jayanti. The event was held under the visionary leadership of Justice Arun Palli, Chief Justice of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh and Patron-in-Chief, J&K Legal Services Authority, and Justice Sanjeev Kumar, Executive Chairman, J&K Legal Services Authority.

The programme was conducted under the directions of Shazia Tabassum, Member Secretary, J&K Legal Services Authority, supervision of O.P. Bhagat, Chairman, District



Legal Services Authority Budgam, and active guidance of Nusrat Ali Hakak, Secretary, DLSA Budgam.

The programme commenced with a session on the values of non-violence and social justice, inspired by the principles of Mahatma Gandhi. The speakers highlighted the role of the legal system in advancing peace, justice, and equality, as envisioned by Gandhi.

His philosophy of

non-violence (Ahimsa) and social justice emphasized peaceful resistance against injustice, guided by truth, compassion, and equality, to transform individuals as well as society. Gandhiji also envisioned the legal system as an instrument to institutionalize these values, advocating for a “world law” and a non-violent international framework to replace exploitative systems and resolve conflicts through negotiation, mediation, and

arbitration.

Similar kind of awareness programmes were organised at Tehsil Legal Services Committees of Charar-i-Sharif, Chadoora, Beerwah, and Magam also.

As part of the programme, a special “Swachhta Abhiyaan” was also organized by DLSA Budgam, symbolizing not only a tribute to Mahatma Gandhi but also a collective commitment to transforming his vision into reality.

The initiative highlighted the power of community participation in building a cleaner, greener, and sustainable future for generations to come.

Awareness activities were also conducted by the Tehsil Legal Services Committees of DLSA Budgam.

KVIB Srinagar celebrates Gandhi Jayanti



KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 02: The Jammu and Kashmir Khadi and Village Industries Board (KVIB), Srinagar, celebrated Gandhi Jayanti on Thursday at the District Office at Industrial Estate, Baghi Ali Mardan Khan Nowshera Srinagar.

District Officer, KVIB Srinagar, Tanveer Ahmad Wani, emphasized the importance of entrepreneurship as a cornerstone of Atma Nirbhar Bharat, aligning with Gandhi's philosophy of Swadeshi and grassroots economic development.

“Self-reliance is the key to a prosperous India,” the officer stated. “Through entrepreneurship, we empower individuals to create opportunities, drive economic growth, and contribute to the nation's self-sufficiency. This is Gandhi's legacy in action.”

He reiterated that Gandhi's ideals of self-reliance and rural empowerment are more relevant today than ever. “A self-reliant village ensures a self-reliant nation. Through entrepreneurship, we are building resilient communities, reducing unemployment, and fostering innovation,” the officer said, urging local youth and artisans to take advantage of KVIB's initiatives.

J&K reports 1142 Dengue cases this year

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Srinagar, Oct 02 (KNO): Dengue cases are on the rise in Jammu and Kashmir with 1,142 infections reported so far this year, health officials confirmed on Thursday.

An official said that the cases include 467 from Jammu, 95 from Samba, 338 from Kathua, 106 from Udhampur, 23 from Reasi, 43 from Rajouri, 12 from Poonch, 14 from Doda, 10 from Ramban, one from Kishtwar, 14 from Kashmir, and 19 from other states.

He said a total of 15,207 tests have been conducted this year. Of the confirmed patients, only 31 required hospitalisation, seven are still under treatment, while one J&K resident succumbed to the disease at DMC Ludhiana.

"People must adopt preemptive measures to combat this painful mosquito-borne infection in the absence of any vaccine," the



official cautioned.

Doctors said that dengue, caused by viruses transmitted by infected Aedes aegypti mosquitoes, remains a persistent health concern in the region. They said the best way to prevent dengue fever is to eliminate pockets of stagnant water that serve as mosquito breeding sites—in homes, schools, workplaces, and surrounding areas.

Mosquito repellents and

full-sleeved clothing are essential protective measures, they added.

According to doctors, dengue-spreading mosquitoes are most active during the day, particularly at dusk and dawn. They advised covering as much of the body as possible, using mosquito nets if sleeping during the day, and spraying nets with repellents.

The common symptoms include fever, severe

headache, eye pain (behind the eyes), muscle or joint pain, rash, nausea, and vomiting.

Doctors warned that stomach pain, persistent vomiting, bleeding from gums or nose, vomiting blood, blood in stools, extreme fatigue, or restlessness could indicate severe dengue requiring immediate medical attention.

J&K has seen fluctuating dengue patterns in recent years.

In 2024, J&K recorded approximately 7,000 dengue cases. The year 2023 saw 6,403 cases, and 2022 recorded the highest ever—8,269 cases with 18 deaths. In comparison, earlier years saw lower figures, including just two cases in 2009, zero in 2010, and gradual increases in subsequent years.

Authorities have reiterated their appeal for public cooperation in reducing mosquito breeding to curb the spread this year—(KNO)

Probe ordered into Leh killings

KNO

Srinagar, Oct 02: In a significant development, the administration of Ladakh has ordered a magisterial inquiry into the killing of four civilians in Leh on September 24 during protests demanding statehood and inclusion under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

To ascertain the detailed facts and circumstances that led to the serious law and order situation, police action, and resultant fatalities, the administration has appointed an IAS officer to lead the inquiry.

Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Nubra, Mukul Beniwal, has been designated as the inquiry officer and directed to submit a comprehensive report within four weeks.

The inquiry was ordered by deputy commissioner Leh on September 26.

According to a notice issued by the inquiry officer—individuals possessing any information related to the incident are invited to record their statements between October 4 and 18 at the DC Office Conference Hall, which will serve as the inquiry venue.

".....Any person(s) having information about the incident or willing to provide oral evidence, written statements, or material evidence (such as photographs or video recordings) may appear before the undersigned and submit their statements/evidence.....," the notice reads—(KNO)

Schools up to Class 8th to reopen today



KNO

Leh, Oct 02: The administration of Ladakh has announced the reopening of schools up to Class 8 in Leh district, effective Friday (October 3).

According to an order issued by the Office of the District Magistrate, Leh, the shops shall also reopen from tomorrow while the operational hours will be from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

"Small passenger buses will also be allowed to operate within the district during these hours," the order stated.

The reopening is subject to compliance with Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023 (BNSS 2023).

The administration has urged strict adherence to safety norms to ensure public order during the easing of restrictions—(KNO)

Congress eyes RS seat in J&K

KNO

Srinagar, Oct 02: The Congress party is likely to stake its claim for one of the three Rajya Sabha seats scheduled for election on October 24, with veteran leader Digvijay Singh set to discuss the matter with the National Conference (NC) leadership.

Highly placed sources said that Digvijay Singh, former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, is expected to hold talks with NC leadership to seek one of the three seats for Congress that the coalition is poised to win.

"He will formally take up the matter with the National Conference," they said, adding that Singh is expected to discuss the issue with NC president Dr. Farooq Abdullah or Chief Minister Omar Abdullah.

Singh was entrusted by the Congress high command in April this year to oversee the functioning of, and engage in discussions regarding, the INC-NC coalition partnership in J&K.

In the Rajya Sabha polls, the NC-Congress alliance is expected to comfortably secure three of the four seats, while the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is strongly positioned to win the remaining seat.

In the current Assembly, the ruling alliance holds 53 members, while the BJP has 28.

The non-BJP opposition bloc comprises seven legislators—three from the PDP, one each from the PC and AAP, and two independents—(KNO)

Dussehra celebrated across Kashmir

RAJA SYED RATHER

Srinagar, Oct 02: The festival of Dussehra, also known as Vijayadashami, was celebrated with great enthusiasm and fervour across the Kashmir Valley on Thursday, symbolizing the timeless victory of good over evil.

The main event was held at Sher-e-Kashmir Stadium in Srinagar, where a towering effigy of Ravana was ceremoniously set ablaze, drawing large crowds from various communities.

The celebration saw participation from people of all walks of life, including Kashmiri Pandits, who continue to uphold their cultural traditions despite being a minority in the region.

One of the participants, Rahul Matoo, a Kashmiri Pandit, expressed, "Dussehra in Kashmir holds a special place in our hearts. It brings us together as a community and strengthens the bond we share with our heritage."

Another local resident from Kheer Bhawani said, "Celebrating Dussehra in the valley reminds us of our roots and shared traditions. It's not just a festival; it's a moment of unity and hope for all of us."

The festival also saw a vibrant display of fireworks that lit up



PHOTO: SHAH JAHANGIR

the Srinagar sky, marking the end of the celebrations on a joyous note.

Adding to the festive spirit, a Kashmiri youth who attended the event with friends said, "This celebration shows that traditions can thrive even in the most challenging times. It's heartening to see people coming together in harmony." Shalu Raina told KNO that like every year, people from all walks of life came together to witness the burning of Ravana, Meghnath and Kumbhkaran, a powerful reminder of unity and the triumph of good over evil.

The administration had made elaborate arrangements for the event, including Robust security measures to ensure a smooth and safe celebration. Meanwhile, the

Office of the Lieutenant Governor in a post on X, wrote: Greetings to all on the auspicious occasion of Vijayadashami.

The message added to the festive cheer and was widely shared on social media platforms

In his message on the eve of the festival, the Chief Minister said, "Dussehra inspires us to uphold the values of truth, righteousness, and justice under all circumstances. Its message of moral courage and harmony is more relevant today than ever."

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah also extended his greetings, wishing the people of Jammu and Kashmir "joy, peace, and a renewed spirit" on the auspicious occasion—(KNO)

RSS launches centenary year programs

YOGESH

Jammu, Oct 02: Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) on Thursday launched its centenary year celebration programs in Jammu & Kashmir, in line with the rest of the country.

These programs will continue throughout the year. As part of this, centenary year-related events were organized in all districts of the Jammu division.

A large number of Swayamsevaks participated in these events wearing full uniform. The programs featured demonstrations by Swayamsevaks of physical training, formations, exercises, and yoga postures.

In Jammu city, the main programs took place at Top Sherkhania and Patoli, adjacent to Janipur. At Top Sherkhania, Prant Seh-Sangchalak Dr. Vikrant Sharma performed the traditional Shastra Pujan (weapon worship) in the presence of Chief Guest Sahil Ji Maharaj, Maa Chandiwale, and District Karyawah Varun Jamwal.

Meanwhile, in the program held at the park in Patoli, Prant Pracharak Mukesh Kumar performed the Shastra Pujan in the presence of Chief Guest, retired Deputy Commissioner Mohan Lal Raina.

Following this, Swayamsevaks conducted a Path Sanchalan (route march) through the Janipur-Patoli area.

At several locations along the route, local residents showered flowers on the Swayamsevaks. The route passed through areas such as Tali Morh, Ram Bihar Colony, Shant Nagar, Indira Nagar, Hari Singh Basti, and Ambedkar Basti. People from all walks of society participated in both events in significant numbers.

At Top Sherkhania, Dr. Vikrant Sharma, speaking as the main speaker, highlighted the RSS's journey in the country and the region from 1925 to 2025. He stated that even today, the Sangh continues to pursue its goal of social development through individual development.

Chief Guest Sahil Ji Maharaj, in his brief address, urged people to attend RSS shakhas along with their families. He also highlighted the contributions made by RSS Swayamsevaks in Jammu & Kashmir.

District Karyawah Varun Jamwal concluded the event with a vote of thanks.

In the second event held at Janipur-Patoli, Prant Pracharak Mukesh Kumar addressed the swayamsevaks and attendees. He extended greetings to all swayamsevaks and society on the occasion of Vijayadashami and the 100th anniversary of the RSS.

He noted that the day also marks the birth anniversaries of Mahatma Gandhi and Lal Bahadur Shastri, and paid tribute to them for giving a new direction to society.

Mukesh Kumar recounted the 100-year history of the RSS, noting that while the organization has faced many ups and downs, it has never strayed from its goal. Even today, it remains committed to character-building through its shakhas.

He emphasized that transformation of society begins with individual development and highlighted the concept of "Panch Parivartan" (Five Transformations). He called on every individual in society to follow this path. In this context, he also touched on key themes such as social harmony, family awareness, environmental responsibility, self-awareness, and civic duties—(KNO)

Vijayadashami celebrated with great enthusiasm in Jammu

YOGESH

Jammu, Oct 02: The historic Parade Ground, Dussehra Ground Gandhi Nagar and other parts of Jammu on Thursday evening transformed into a vibrant epicenter of devotion and jubilation as thousands converged to celebrate Vijayadashami, or Dussehra, with unparalleled enthusiasm.

The evening skies erupted in a mesmerizing display of fire and fervor during the iconic Ravan Dahan, where towering effigies of the demon king Ravana, along with his kin Meghnad and Kumbhakarna, were set ablaze in a symbolic triumph of good over evil.

This age-old ritual not only lit up the horizon but also kindled a profound sense of unity, righteousness, and cultural pride across the city.

As the sun dipped below the Tawi River's horizon, an estimated crowd of 10,000 spanning families, youth, elders, and visitors from neighboring regions – packed the sprawling Parade Ground, one of Jammu's most revered venues for such grand spectacles.

The air buzzed with the rhythmic beats of dhol drums, the soul-stirring chants of "Jai Shri Ram," and the scent of incense



mingling with festive sweets.

Children perched on parents' shoulders, wide-eyed with anticipation, while groups of friends shared laughter amid the sea of saffron, orange, and green attire, reflecting the festival's kaleidoscope of traditions.

The day's festivities kicked off at dawn with sacred rituals honoring Goddess Durga's victory over Mahishasura, marking the culmination of the nine-day Navratri.

By midday, the ground had swelled with activity, elaborate Ramlila performances reenacted scenes from the Ramayana, drawing gasps and applause from the audience as actors in

resplendent costumes brought Lord Rama's epic battle to life. But it was Ravan Dahan around 6:30 pm that stole the show.

Crafted meticulously over weeks by a dedicated team of artisans, the central effigy of Ravana stood an imposing 80 feet tall, adorned with intricate bamboo frames, colorful fabrics, and symbolic weapons forged from lightweight materials.

Flanking it were 50-foot figures of Meghnad and Kumbhakarna, their forms crackling with dry grass and hay for the dramatic burn.

In a heartwarming testament to communal harmony, these effigies were sculpted by Muslim

artisans like Ghiyasuddin Khan and his family, who have upheld this craft for over 40 years across more than 50 Dussehra events in Jammu and Kashmir.

Khan, speaking to reporters amid the final touches, emphasized, "This is our shared heritage – a bridge of brotherhood that burns away division, just as the flames consume Ravana."

With a ceremonial arrow shot by a young volunteer portraying Lord Rama, the effigies ignited in a symphony of roaring flames and fireworks, painting the twilight in hues of gold and crimson. The blaze, lasting over 20 minutes, was accompanied by a cascade of sky lanterns and synchronized light shows, turning the evening into a celestial homage to dharma's eternal victory.

Dussehra is also celebrated by Shri Lakshmi Narayan Mandir Management Trust, Gandhi Nagar, Jammu at in Dussehra Ground Gandhi Nagar, Jammu. A beautiful well decorated Rath boarding Lord Rama/Lakshman and Maa Sita in similar attire was prepared which passed through various parts of Gandhi Nagar before reaching Dussehra Ground for burning of Effigies of Ravana, Kumbh Karan and Meghnath.

Similarly effigies of Ravana, Kumbh Karan and Meghnath

were set ablaze in Bahu Fort, Kol Kandoli Temple, Sainik Colony, and other districts of the division.

Meanwhile, the traditional Dussehra rituals of Shastra Pujan (weapon worship) and Singhasan Pujan (royal throne worship) were performed at the historic Amar Mahal Palace, Jammu, by members of the erstwhile Dogra Royal Family of Jammu and Kashmir.

The ceremonies were led by Rajkumar Martand Singh, Trustee of the Amar Mahal Palace. The palace was illuminated and adorned with flowers, adding grandeur to the celebrations.

According to the release, these age-old rituals symbolize the triumph of righteousness over evil, valor over fear, and truth over falsehood. Their observance pays tribute to the legacy of the Dogra rulers while preserving the cultural and spiritual ethos of Dussehra.

By upholding these traditions, the Dogra Royal Family reaffirmed its commitment to safeguarding Jammu's cultural heritage and ensuring that these revered customs are passed on with dignity to future generations.

The occasion brought together members of the community in a spirit of harmony, reflecting the eternal message of Dussehra, the victory of good over evil—(KNO)

Kashmir teacher selected for FTEA in US

WARIS FAYAZ

Srinagar, Oct 02: In a proud moment for the education fraternity of Jammu and Kashmir, Sajad Akbar Rather, a dedicated Government teacher from Govt. Boys Higher Secondary School (BHSS) Bomai in Sopore, has been selected for the Fulbright Teaching Excellence and Achievement (FTEA) Program 2025–26, one of the world's most prestigious fellowships for educators.

As per the details available, Rather has been selected for the Fall 2026 cohort, scheduled from September 9 to October 29, 2026 (tentative), where he will represent India among a distinguished group of international educators.

During his fellowship, Sajad will be taking part in university-level courses, specialized seminars on 21st-century teaching practices, observe and co-teach in U.S. schools and participate in a range of cultural and community activities.

The program, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and administered by IREX, brings together exceptional teachers from across the globe, aims to foster mutual understanding, exchange of innovative

practices and leadership growth.

Sajad Rather is a National Awardee from NCERT (2018) and recipient of the UT Best Teacher Award (2022). At his institution, he mentors students under the Atal Tinkering Lab (ATL) initiative and serves as a UT-level Resource Person in ICT with JK SCERT. His research work has been widely presented at national conferences, highlighting innovative methodologies in the teaching-learning process.

Expressing his joy and gratitude, Rather told KNO that he owes this success to his mentors, colleagues and students, who have been his constant source of motivation

"I am thankful to my Principal, Abdul Qayoom Dar, for his guidance and appreciation of my efforts and to Fulbright alumni Waseem Aziz, Shaista Masoodi among others for their timely support. I am equally indebted to my family, friends and students for standing by me throughout this journey," Rather said.

He also extended heartfelt thanks to the School Education Department J&K (UT), especially Education Minister Sakeena Itoo and others for motivating and inspiring teachers to innovate—(KNO)

EDITORIAL

Friday Brief: Embracing Our Role As Environmental Stewards

Islam provides profound guidance on environmental protection, establishing ecological consciousness as an integral part of the faith. These teachings remind believers that nature is not a resource to be exploited but a sacred trust (amanah) to be preserved with reverence and responsibility. The Quran repeatedly emphasises the concept of balance (mizan) in creation: "And the earth We have spread out, and set therein mountains standing firm, and

produced therein every kind of beautiful growth. As a lesson and reminder for every servant who turns to Allah" (50:7-8). This verse, among many others, underscores that every element of nature serves a divine purpose and deserves protection. The prohibition against wastefulness is equally clear: "Eat and drink, but waste not by excess, for Allah loves not the wasters" (7:31). The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) exemplified environmental ethics in his teachings and

practices. He declared, "The world is green and beautiful, and Allah has appointed you His stewards over it" (Sahih Muslim), establishing human beings as guardians (khalifah) of the earth. He promoted conservation by encouraging water preservation even when near flowing rivers and forbade the unnecessary cutting of trees, even during wartime. His emphasis on planting trees remains particularly relevant: "If the Hour is imminent and anyone of you has a sapling

in his hand, let him plant it if he can." These teachings extend to animal welfare as well. The Prophet (SAW) condemned the mistreatment of animals and taught compassion toward all living creatures, stating that kindness to animals is a cause for divine mercy. In today's context of climate change and ecological degradation, these Islamic principles demand urgent application. From reducing consumption and combating pollution to protecting biodiversity

and conserving water, environmentalism becomes an act of worship (ibadah). It is our responsibility to advocate for sustainable practices, support conservation efforts, and oppose destructive policies. True faith manifests not only in rituals but in how we treat Allah's creation. By embracing our role as stewards of the earth, we fulfil a sacred covenant and contribute to a healthier, more balanced world - for ourselves and generations to come.

To Survive, The United Nations Must Leave America

While the demand for what the United Nations does is as great as ever, its ability to deliver has obviously been diminished. There is no way for it to survive without scaling back its ambitions and abilities, and that, in turn, may require a move to a more hospitable country.

Carl Bildt

The annual United Nations General Assembly is always an occasion for taking stock of the state of the world. But this year, on the 80th anniversary of the UN's founding, it was also an occasion to take stock of the organization itself.

By any measure, the UN's situation is dire. While Russian aggression against Ukraine and mounting tensions between the United States and China cannot be blamed on the UN, they do highlight a fundamental problem. The UN Security Council - where China, Russia, and the US each wield a veto - is locked in a permanent confrontation over one issue or another, blocking the rest of the organization from moving forward on almost anything.

Consider the situation in the Middle East, where the UN has played a central role in conflict resolution and peacemaking ever since the State of Israel was established (under a UN resolution). Numerous UN peacekeeping operations in the region have helped to alleviate tensions, and massive humanitarian efforts, primarily aimed at Palestinian refugee communities, have saved countless lives. While the UN has not forged a lasting peace, it has certainly helped prevent some wars and shorten others.

In recent years, however, the UN has increasingly been sidelined. The so-called Quartet - the UN, the US, the European Union, and Russia - is now a distant memory, and numerous UN operations have come under direct attack, primarily by Israel. The Israeli government not only questions the humanitarian efforts of UNRWA (the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees) but now also blocks the organization's work whenever it can.



Before Hamas's October 7, 2023, attack on Israel, the UN was essential to keeping the situation in Gaza relatively stable. Though it couldn't overcome divisions among the Palestinians, especially after Hamas assumed power in Gaza in 2006, it could, and did, help provide the basic means of survival for the enclave's two million people. But now Israel has questioned or attacked virtually every aspect of the UN's work on this issue, and it could not have done so without America's tacit support. US President Donald Trump, in particular, has proved willing to accept virtually everything that Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's

extremist government does.

Meanwhile, the UN has struggled to mobilize an effective response in South Sudan, a semi-failed state, and in Sudan, where a devastating civil war is entering its third year. Similarly, from the Katanga secession in 1962 to the recent peace operations in northeastern Congo, Central Africa continues to preoccupy UN peacekeepers and mediators.

Around the world, there is no shortage of crises that demand UN engagement - from Gaza and Sudan to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Myanmar, and Afghanistan, to name just a few. But with the

larger powers fixated on their confrontations with one another, and with the Trump administration withdrawing not only active support but also funding, the outlook for the UN appears grim.

The US provides 25% of UN funding, but it has stopped sending its contributions. It also traditionally accounts for an even larger share of voluntary financing for humanitarian operations, but these funds, too, have been cut. Making matters worse, China, the UN's second-largest contributor, is also behind on its payments.

With its financial situation growing desperate, UN Secretary-General António

Guterres warns that staff across the organization will need to be cut by one-fifth. Morale is said to be low, as is the prospect of a change for the better. With his recent address to the General Assembly, Trump made clear that he has nothing but contempt for the organization. The only role he seems able to see for it is to help him get a Nobel Peace Prize. The Trump administration's forthcoming review of America's multilateral commitments is almost certain to deliver more bad news.

Does the UN have any future? While the demand for it is as great as ever, its ability to deliver has obviously been diminished. There is no way for it to survive without scaling back its ambitions and abilities; precisely how it goes about this will be a central issue over the next few years.

With Guterres's tenure ending in 2026, the process of selecting his successor will also have to feature a debate about ensuring the UN's long-term survival. Moving the headquarters out of the US is a natural step, owing not only to the withdrawal of US funding and the need for cost savings, but also to the US refusal to grant visas to those attending UN gatherings (as it did with the Palestinian leadership this year).

Yes, a UN that is no longer headquartered in New York would be different in many ways. But relocation also may be the only way for it to survive. Dag Hammarskjöld, the UN's second secretary-general, famously remarked that the body was not created to deliver Heaven, but rather to spare us from Hell. That task remains as important as ever. But for things to stay the same, everything must change.

Carl Bildt is a former prime minister and foreign minister of Sweden.

Source: Project Syndicate

How To Make AI Serve Human Connection

The implications of AI for loneliness and belonging are just beginning to show

Kim Samuel

Earlier this year, an OpenAI study reached a troubling conclusion: Heavy ChatGPT users are more likely to report loneliness than non-users. The correlation between usage and feelings of social disconnection was strongest among people who leaned on the large language model for companionship and emotional support. The findings echo warnings from scholars, including Sherry Turkle of MIT, that "relationships" with machines often erode our capacity for the messy, demanding work of real connection.

Yet, in Silicon Valley, the exact opposite message is taking hold. Amid a slew of new AI-driven mental health apps and startups, tech titans like Mark Zuckerberg argue that chatbots will soon solve the crisis of disconnection. The Meta chief recently lamented that the "average American has fewer than three friends," and then claimed that "people are going to want a system that knows them well and understands them in the way that their feed algorithms do," pitching AI companions and therapists as the ultimate remedy.

Which is it? Will AI decimate human connection, or will it help rebuild it?

The answer, of course, depends on the choices we make both as individuals and as a society. But one thing now seems certain: AI will radically reshape what it means to belong as a human being.

Both sides are correct that there's already a real problem. Research reveals that in-person human interactions have dropped by roughly 45 percent in recent decades. The challenge isn't just loneliness. It's declining trust, social cohesion, shared purpose, and even a lost sense of connection to the physical environments where we live. Cumulatively, I've come to understand this broader issue as a deficit of "belonging." The US now ranks last among G7 countries with respect to trust in public institutions. New research shows our connection to nature has fallen by 60 percent over the past two centuries. Anxiety and depression, as well as political polarization and pessimism, are on the rise.

There are glimmers of hope with the rise of ubiquitous AI. A recent peer-reviewed study found clinicians preferred ChatGPT's answers to patient questions for quality and empathy, suggesting a role for AI triage and coaching. A growing range of therapy-oriented apps and tools offer low-cost, always-on mental health support. AI tutors show promise for freeing up teachers to emphasize the human work of mentoring and care. And AI systems can potentially serve as civic tools that summarize public comments in debates, translate government hearings in real time, and map out areas of agreement between conflicting groups.

But healthy skepticism is warranted. Julianne Holt-Lunstad of Brigham Young University and other scholars have shown how face-to-face connection bolsters

emotional well-being and reduces risks of health problems like cardiovascular disease. Marco Iacoboni, a neuroscientist at UCLA, has explored the indispensable role of "mirror neurons," brain cells activated through in-person human interaction, for empathy and emotional understanding.

To understand the implications of AI for human belonging, we also need to look beyond effects on literal human interaction. Start with work and purpose. New estimates suggest widespread AI adoption could save U.S. companies hundreds of billions of dollars a year, largely by reducing labour costs. While we need to explore strategies like universal basic income to cope, we also need to be talking about the less obvious implications of a mass displacement of employment, including what happens to our sense of mission and social solidarity when swaths of purposeful work are automated away.

Next, consider our connection to nature. People are now rightly scrutinizing the expansion of data centers for its effects on carbon emissions, water, land use, and grid resilience. But less discussed is how increasingly engaging AI systems push total time online upward, displacing neighbourhood chance encounters, time outdoors, and overall sense of connection to nature.

Finally, consider what AI means for our experience of belonging in community and society. Disinformation and deepfakes are already hijacking civic deliberation; hyper-personalized media and feeds narrow our exposure to new views and ideas; black-box

decisions in hiring, lending, housing, and parole can further corrode trust in public institutions.

How do we take a stand for human connection and belonging before we enter the age of artificial general intelligence and the stakes get even higher? We need to think about the world we want—and a set of principles for realizing it.

One idea is to use AI to augment human relationships, not replace them. That means designing systems to hand us back to one another and to our communities. For example, AI systems should be designed to prompt people to connect with humans. Mental health systems should be designed to offer human handoffs—to a counsellor, peer group, or hotline—especially when there's risk of dangerous behaviour. Similarly, we should strive to make offline life the default. Product teams can add gentle "step-outside" nudges after heavy use, and public-private partnerships can turn generic notifications into local invitations—park events, library story hours, farmers' markets—so screens point people back to real physical places.

We also need to make information verifiable and systems explainable. That means "content-provenance standards" so people can see when media is synthetic. It can mean simple and understandable explanations—and a right to human appeal—when an algorithm touches a consequential decision like hiring or mortgage lending.

In terms of the economic transition, we should be using the savings generated by AI

to buy back human face time with patients, customers, and students. It should also fund rapid, paid retraining tied to real jobs in sectors that hinge on presence and trust.

Overall, we need to measure what matters and then invest in it. Wherever AI affects schools, health, housing, or justice, we should require a short "belonging impact review" that looks at factors like trust, agency, in-person participation, and time outdoors. We should treat social connection and contact with nature as vital public goods, and fund the infrastructure that enables them.

All this might seem improbable, given the manic race to build bigger and smarter LLMs and integrate them everywhere. But there's already massive political will to deal with these problems. Across the political spectrum, people are concerned about the impacts of AI on employment and social connections.

Without a lot of careful planning and effort, AI will likely make us lonelier, more distracted, and more estranged. Mark Zuckerberg's vision of chatbots replacing human connection is naïve at best. But AI can still be a net-positive for human belonging—if we use it consciously to draw closer to what matters.

Kim Samuel is the founder and chief belonging officer of the Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness and the author of On Belonging: Finding Connection in an Age of Isolation.

Source: Psychology Today

The views expressed by contributors on this page are their own and do not necessarily reflect the policies or positions of the newspaper

Govt committed to timely implementation of schemes: Rana

Reviews progress of key RDD schemes in Mendhar

KT News Desk

MENDHAR, OCTOBER 02: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana Thursday chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the progress of key development schemes undertaken by Rural Development department (RDD) for the fiscal year 2025-26, with a particular focus on Balakot and Mankote blocks.

The meeting was attended by the Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD), Shakeel A Malik; Assistant Commissioner Panchayats (ACP), Block Development Officers (BDOs) of the respective blocks and other senior officers of the department.

During the review, the Minister underscored the critical role of RDD in catalysing rural transformation, emphasizing that all development efforts must be aligned with the needs and aspirations of local communities.

He reiterated the government's commitment of timely implementation of schemes, in a transparent and people-centric manner, with enhanced



convergence among departments and active community participation at every stage.

While taking stock of the Annual Action Plan, the Minister pointed out the need to bridge the gap between physical achievements and financial expenditure under major funding components including the Area Development Plan (APDP), PRI Grants, CD Panchayat funds, Tribal Sub-Plan, District Capex and the Vibrant Village Programme.

He directed officials to identify implementation challenges, remove bottlenecks and adopt a proactive approach to ensure that all ongoing works are completed within stipulated timelines.

Reviewing the progress under flagship schemes like PMAY (G) and MGNREGA, the Minister instructed Block Development Officers to take ownership of

projects and expedite the execution of works in accordance with approved block-wise plans.

He laid strong emphasis on the timely disbursement of wages under MGNREGA and called for an increase in the number of workdays generated to enhance livelihood opportunities for the rural population.

He also urged officials to resolve delays in wage payments and clear all pending arrears within a fixed time frame.

With regard to PMAY-G (Awas-Plus), Rana directed officers to closely monitor the progress of house completions and evaluate new sanctions.

He stressed that special attention must be given to the rehabilitation of disaster-affected families and issued instructions to expedite damage assessment surveys and submit detailed proposals for assistance at the

earliest.

Highlighting the importance of transparency and accountability in public service delivery, Rana called for the regular conduct of social audits and strict adherence to quality standards in all development works.

He asserted that transparency forms the foundation of an accountable governance system and must be upheld without compromise.

The Minister also reviewed the progress under Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) and assessed block-wise achievements across various components like Individual Household Latrines (IHHL), Community Sanitary Complexes, Solid Waste Management units, compost pits and waste management sheds.

He reiterated that the core objective of SBM-G is to establish

an effective system for waste collection, segregation and scientific disposal and urged officials to intensify their efforts to achieve this goal.

During the meeting, the Minister also stressed the significance of convergence between the Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) and MGNREGA to promote sustainable watershed development.

He encouraged the promotion of innovative livelihood models and called for greater support to Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to strengthen rural livelihoods and economic empowerment.

Taking a comprehensive review of the ongoing construction of Panchayat Ghars in Balakote and Mankote blocks, the Minister examined the block-wise progress and urged all executing agencies and stakeholders to work in close coordination to overcome on-ground challenges.

He also directed them to resolve any pending land issues without delay to ensure the timely completion of all sanctioned Panchayat Ghars.

Rana reaffirmed Omar Abdullah Government's commitment to inclusive rural development, assuring that every possible measure will be taken to deliver impactful outcomes that reflect the aspirations of the people.

Gandhi Jayanti celebrated in Ganderbal DC felicitates students, Safai Mitras



KT News Desk

GANDERBAL, OCTOBER 2: District Administration Ganderbal Thursday organized an event at Clock Tower, Duderhama to commemorate the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti.

During the programme rich tributes were paid to the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, while promoting his timeless values of truth, simplicity, non-violence, self-sufficiency, and cleanliness.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC extended greetings to the people on Gandhi Jayanti and remembered Gandhi Ji's enduring legacy of peace, non-violence, and community service.

He highlighted that during the fortnight Sewa Parv campaign, the District Administration carried out extensive awareness drives on cleanliness, Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan, and various welfare activities which would continue throughout the year.

The DC urged the community

to extend full cooperation to the administration in its endeavors towards a cleaner environment, a drug-free society, and overall public welfare.

The event featured cultural performances by students showcasing Gandhian philosophy and the importance of Swachhata as a collective responsibility.

On the occasion, a felicitation ceremony was also held wherein the DC distributed certificates of appreciation among students, Safai Mitras, and other participants in recognition of their active role in the campaign and their dedicated service to society.

The celebrations witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, frontline sanitation workers, and the local community.

The programme concluded with a reaffirmation of the district's commitment to uphold Gandhian ideals and work collectively towards a cleaner, healthier, and more inclusive society.

KVIB Jammu commemorates Gandhi Jayanti with reverence



KT News Desk

JAMMU, OCTOBER 2: The J&K Khadi and Village Industries Board, Division Jammu, solemnly commemorated Gandhi Jayanti, honoring the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, the revered Father of the Nation.

The event paid heartfelt tribute to Gandhiji's enduring legacy as a freedom fighter and social reformer. His unwavering commitment to non-violence, truth, and rural empowerment was remembered with deep reverence. Staff members gathered to reflect on his

pivotal role in India's independence movement and his lifelong dedication to uplifting the marginalized through khadi and village industries.

The celebration included speeches and reaffirmation of the Board's mission to promote self-reliance and sustainable development in line with Gandhian principles.

The J&K Khadi and Village Industries Board remains committed to preserving and promoting the values championed by Mahatma Gandhi, continuing to inspire generations toward a more equitable and self-sufficient society.

Kusht Mukti Abhiyan conducted on Gandhi Jayanti



KT News Desk

DODA, OCTOBER 2: On the last day of the ongoing Swasth Nari Sakshat Parivar campaign and the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, the "Father of the Nation," the Health Department Doda, under the overall guidance of CMO Dr. Om Kumar, organized Kusht Mukti Abhiyan events across the district.

The purpose of observing the day was to create mass awareness about leprosy and to sensitize the public about eliminating stigma associated with the disease.

The main programme was held at the CMO office.

Among those present included BMO Ghat, Dr. Abdul Gafoor, along with the staff of CMO and Dy CMO Office Doda.

On the occasion, a campaign vehicle was flagged off by the Dr. Abdul Gafoor in the presence of health staff.

Later, all officials and staff took a pledge to fight against leprosy stigma and to spread awareness in the community.

Similar awareness programmes were organized at PHC Assar, SDH Gandoh, CHC Thathri and other parts of the district to mark the day. Apart from awareness activities, cleanliness drives were also conducted in hospitals and health institutions to promote the message of hygiene and sanitation.

The Health Department reaffirmed its commitment to continue such initiatives for the welfare of society and to work towards a leprosy-free district.

Div Com attends commemorative event on Gandhi Jayanti

KT News Desk

JAMMU, OCTOBER 02: Divisional Commissioner Jammu Ramesh Kumar attended an event organised Thursday by Gandhi Global Family (GGF) J&K to commemorate the 156th birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, at the historic Diwan-e-Aam, Mubarak Mandi Heritage Complex, Jammu.

In his address, Ramesh Kumar urged students and youth to imbibe Gandhian values in their everyday lives to build a peaceful and harmonious society. He highlighted the timeless relevance of non-violence, a cornerstone of Bapu's philosophy, particularly in the present global context.

He further emphasized the importance of promoting national integration and equitable development of all sections of society. Stressing on Bapu's personal commitment to cleanliness, he encouraged the gathering to adopt cleanliness of self and surroundings as a fundamental civic responsibility.

On the occasion, PadmaShri Dr. S. P. Varma, President of Gandhi Global Family J&K, called for the strengthening of global brotherhood and peace. He reiterated that simplicity, non-violence, truthfulness, self-reliance and compassion, which form the core of Gandhian philosophy, offer practical solutions to address many of the contemporary



global challenges.

The day also marked the observance of International Non-Violence Day 2025. Students from different schools and Colleges highlighted Mahatma Gandhi's contributions to world peace and non-violence through speeches and presentations.

Tributes were also paid to former Prime Minister Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri on his birth anniversary. The event was attended by people from all walks of life, including students, teachers, senior citizens and other dignitaries, who joined in offering rich floral tributes to Mahatma Gandhi.

A special felicitation ceremony was also held during the event, wherein prominent social activists were honoured by the Divisional Commissioner Ramesh Kumar for their exemplary services during humanitarian crises, particularly post Operation Sindoor and the Jammu floods.

The awardees

included Summi Sahi Seth, Renu Anthony, Joginder Kaur, Dr. Jyoti Malhotra, Punit Kaur, Neetu Bali, Dr. Perivinder Kaur, Dr. Dinesh Gupta, Er. S. K. Vaid, Sharat Sharma, Bhanu Pratap Singh, S. Gurdeep Singh Comrade, Er. Dalbir Singh Chib and Amit Varma.

The day's proceedings were ably conducted by Dr. Perivinder Kaur, member of GGF Women Jammu.

Renu Anthony, also a member of GGF Women Jammu delivered the vote of thanks.

A comprehensive report on the recent humanitarian efforts by Gandhi Global Family J&K during Operation Sindoor and the Jammu floods was presented by Summi Sahi Seth, Vice President, GGF Women Jammu.

The event was organised under the overall supervision of the organising committee, comprising Dr. Dinesh Gupta, Dr. Robin Gill, Manish Joshi, Er. Satish Vaid, Raj Kumar, Ved Verma, Gopal Sharma and Amit Varma.

Gandhi Jayanti: DLSA Jammu conducts cleanliness drive



KT News Desk

JAMMU, OCTOBER 2: District Legal Services Authority, Jammu in commemoration of Gandhi Jayanti, held a Cleanliness and plantation drive in the premises of District Court Complex Janipur, Jammu on Thursday.

The event started with the floral tribute to the Father of the Nation "Mahatma Gandhi" by Y. P. Bourney, Chairman District Legal Services Authority Jammu in the presence of other Ld. Judicial Officers of District Jammu, symbolizing that the light of truth and justice shall always be the guiding force in the present times.

Y. P. Bourney, Principal District and Sessions Judge Jammu (Chairman, DLSA Jammu) while interacting with the gathering highlighted Gandhi Ji's thoughts on truth, non-violence and cleanliness. He emphasized that cleanliness should begin with our own bodies, then to our homes

and finally to the outside world. He shared a powerful message about maintaining a clean environment.

A plantation drive was also organised within the District Court Campus, where all Ld. Judicial officers planted the saplings and gave a message to make a positive impact on the environment as it is a right time to reflect on the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi and strive for peace and harmony in everyone's life.

In a heartwarming gesture, Pr. District and Sessions Judge Y. P. Bourney presented refreshment boxes to the dedicated Safai karamcharis of District Court Complex, acknowledging their hard work and contributions.

The programme was attended by Ld. Judicial Officers posted at District Headquarter Jammu along with their ministerial staff, LADCs, Panel Lawyers, PLVs and staff of DLSA Jammu were also present on the occasion.

Samba launches Leprosy awareness campaign

KT News Desk

SAMBA, OCTOBER 2: In a significant public health initiative coinciding with Gandhi Jayanti and marking the culmination of Sewa Pakhwada, the District Administration Samba Thursday launched an extensive Leprosy Awareness Campaign with the flagging off of a specially-equipped Awareness Van.

The event was led by Additional Deputy Commissioner Samba, Jagdish Singh, alongside Chief Medical Officer Dr. Vidhi Bhatial, District Health Officer Samba, Block Medical Officers and senior officials from the Health Department.

The launch of this awareness van represents a crucial step forward in the district's commitment to eliminating leprosy through early detection, comprehensive treatment and sustained public education. The mobile awareness unit has been equipped with carefully crafted audio messages and jingles designed

to disseminate vital information about leprosy - its causes, symptoms, treatment options and prevention measures - directly to communities across the district. This door-to-door approach aims to break down barriers of misinformation and reach populations who may not have easy access to healthcare facilities.

Speaking at the occasion, ADC Samba, Jagdish Singh highlighted the multifaceted objectives of this campaign, emphasizing that leprosy elimination requires not just medical intervention but a comprehensive societal response. He commended the Health Department for their tireless efforts in preparing this initiative and stressed that early detection and complete treatment remain the cornerstones of success. The Additional Deputy Commissioner underscored that one of the campaign's most critical missions is to address and dismantle the social stigma that has historically surrounded leprosy, which often prevents

affected individuals from seeking timely medical care.

Chief Medical Officer Dr. Vidhi Bhatial elaborated on the program's holistic approach, explaining that the campaign extends far beyond awareness generation. The initiative encompasses early case detection through active surveillance, ensuring complete treatment adherence and conducting thorough household contact surveys to identify potential cases at the earliest stage.

Dr. Bhatial emphasized that the program places significant focus on disability prevention and medical rehabilitation services, recognizing that comprehensive care must address both the disease and its potential complications. The Health Department is providing essential support including dressing materials, supportive medicines and specially designed micro-cellular rubber footwear to patients, ensuring they receive complete medical and

rehabilitative care. Furthermore, nutrition kits were distributed to leprosy patients during the event, acknowledging the crucial role of nutrition in recovery and overall health management.

The timing of this launch carries profound symbolic significance. Gandhi Jayanti, observed on October 2nd, honors Mahatma Gandhi's unwavering commitment to the upliftment of marginalized communities and his compassionate approach to those suffering from leprosy. Bapu's philosophy of inclusive healthcare and dignity for all resonates deeply with this campaign's objectives. Additionally, the event marks the conclusion of Sewa Pakhwada (Sewa Parv), a fortnight-long celebration of service and public welfare initiatives. This convergence of dates amplifies the message that public health is not merely a technical challenge but a moral imperative rooted in service and compassion.

The Leprosy Awareness Campaign represents a comprehensive strategy combining medical intervention, community engagement, and social transformation.

By taking healthcare information directly to the people through the awareness van, conducting systematic household surveys, ensuring treatment completion and providing holistic rehabilitation support, the Health Department is creating a robust framework for leprosy elimination.

The district administration's commitment to this cause reflects a broader vision of accessible, stigma-free healthcare that leaves no one behind.

As the awareness van begins its journey through the villages and communities of Samba, it carries not just information but hope - hope for early detection, effective treatment and a future where leprosy no longer casts a shadow over lives and communities.

KVIC organises SDTPs across J&K on Gandhi Jayanti



KT News Desk

Srinagar, Oct 02: To mark the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti, celebrated on October 02, multiple Skill Development Training Programmes (SDTPs) were held by KVIC across various districts of Jammu & Kashmir on Thursday.

The events were held in presence of Director, KVIC, J&K and Ladakh, Rajesh Kumar, and Principal, PMTC KVIC, Pampore, Anil Kumar Sharma.

The programme commenced with floral garlanding ceremony to pay tribute to Mahatma Gandhi, followed by the Khadi Pledge, taken as part of the ongoing Khadi Mahotsav being celebrated from September 17th to October 23rd, 2025.

Speaking on the occasion, Anil Kumar Sharma briefed

the attendees about the various skill development training programmes being conducted across different districts of J&K. He emphasized the importance of skill-building in empowering youth and promoting self-employment.

Addressing the gathering, Director, KVIC, Rajesh Kumar, expressed his deep gratitude towards Mahatma Gandhi for his enduring legacy. He encouraged all participants to stay motivated and continue learning new skills, which are crucial for personal growth and national development.

Several participants also shared their experiences, explaining how the training programmes have helped them acquire valuable skills and opened new avenues for livelihood and entrepreneurship.

Dy CM lays foundation stones of three bridges in Nowshera



KT News Desk

Nowshera, Oct 02: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary on Thursday laid the foundation stones for three vital bridge projects aimed at strengthening road connectivity in the Nowshera area.

He laid the foundation stone for the construction of a 50-meter span motorable bridge with a footpath over Androoth Nallah at Village Androoth under NABARD, with an estimated cost of Rs. 292 lakh.

He also laid the foundation stone for the 28-meter span motorable bridge at Rattan Galla Kalsian, including approaches, with an estimated cost of Rs. 284 lakh.

Another major project for which the foundation was laid is a 50-meter span motorable

bridge with a footpath over Androoth Nallah at Village Androoth, with an estimated cost of Rs. 400 lakh.

During his visit, the Deputy Chief Minister also held a Public Darbar at Kalsian, where he interacted with the people and listened to their issues and demands. The Deputy CM redressed several grievances on the spot.

The general public expressed gratitude to the Deputy Chief Minister for sanctioning and laying the foundation of these important bridges, which will greatly benefit the local population by improving connectivity and easing transportation.

SE Tilak Raj; Executive Engineer PWD Nowshera Sarwar Mehmood; besides other district and sectoral officers also accompanied the Deputy CM during the visit.

Good will always triumph over evil: IG BSF Ashok Yadaw Urges people to burn inner evils, embrace positivity, work for nation building

Naveed Ul Haq Ganaiee

Budgam, Oct 02: Inspector General of Border Security Force (BSF) Kashmir Frontier, Ashok Yadaw, on Thursday said that the festival of Dussehra carries the timeless message of the triumph of good over evil, urging people to shun negativity and contribute towards nation building.

Speaking at the grand Dussehra celebrations organised at the BSF Headquarters in Humhama, Budgam, IG Yadaw, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said that BSF officers and jawans stand united in celebrating festivals despite serving in the most difficult conditions along the Line of Control (LoC). “Our troops work under very tough circumstances at the borders while their families stay back here. We all decided to come together. Over the last two days we showcased Ramleela



and concluded today with Dussehra,” he said.

The IG BSF underlined that the values drawn from Lord Ram's life inspire people to bring positivity into their own lives. “As effigies of Ravan, Meghnath and Kumbhakaran went up in flames today, it symbolised burning away our inner evils.

The core message is that good will always prevail over

evil, and those who may be straying should leave the wrong path and turn towards the nation's development,” Yadaw said.

The Dussehra programme included Ramleela performances and the ceremonial ‘Ravan Dahan,’ which were enthusiastically witnessed and enjoyed by BSF personnel and their families—(KNO)

Single adverse remark against judge, doubtful integrity enough for his compulsory retirement: Guj HC

PTI

Ahmedabad, Oct 02: The Gujarat High Court has called upon the judges to be “honest to the core with high moral values”, and said even a single adverse remark against a judge in his entire service record or question over his integrity was sufficient ground for his “compulsory retirement”.

A bench of Justices A S Supelia and L S Pirzada stated in its order pronounced on Tuesday that even issuing a show-cause notice to such a judicial officer was not necessary as compulsory retirement in public interest does not amount to punishment.

Dismissing the contention of petitioner J K Acharya, an ad hoc sessions judge who was compulsorily retired along with 17 other sessions judges in November 2016 by the high court's full court, the HC also said every judge must discharge his judicial duty with integrity, impartiality and intellectual honesty as he holds an office of public trust.

“A single uncommunicated adverse remark in the entire service record, or a doubtful integrity, is enough to retire a judicial officer compulsorily in the public interest. Any promotion or grant of a higher pay-scale/selection grade cannot have any impact on the order of compulsory retirement,” the HC bench said.

It said the requirement of issuance of a show-cause notice to such a judicial officer is not necessary.

The court said that the judges of the high court's full court may compulsorily retire a judicial officer on the basis of his/her general reputation even without any tangible material against him/her, and judicial review of such order is permissible only on very restricted grounds.

Acharya was compulsorily retired along with 17 other sessions judges as part of the high court's policy at that time to evaluate judges at the ages of 50 and 55, and retiring those whose performance was not found satisfactory.

Acharya had challenged the decision as well as the actions of the state government and the governor in implementing it.

The court said that an order of compulsory/premature retirement in the public interest or in the interest of administration is not a punishment.

It noted that the decision of the high court's full court to compulsorily retire a judicial officer in the public interest reflected the “collective wisdom of all the judges” and highlighted the importance of “subjective satisfaction and deliberation” arrived at by careful scrutiny and filtration at different stages.

“We may reiterate that sometimes it would be very difficult to gather concrete or material evidence to prove doubtful integrity and make it part of the record, and it would be impracticable for the reporting officer or the competent controlling officer preparing the confidential report to provide specific instances of shortfalls supported by evidence,” it noted.

DC Pulwama distributes sanction letters, motorised tricycles among beneficiaries

KT News Desk

Pulwama, Oct 02: The fortnight-long festival of public service, inclusive governance and community participation “Sewa Parv” culminated today in Pulwama with a grand function organised at Government Degree College for Boys, Pulwama. The function organised on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti served as a tribute to the life and timeless teachings of the Father of the Nation.

On the occasion, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Pulwama, Dr. Basharat Qayoom, accompanied by Senior Superintendent of Police, Pulwama, P.D. Nitya, inspected stalls set up by various departments, including Health, Cooperatives, Agriculture, Horticulture, Labour & Employment, Revenue, KVIB, SHGs, Handicrafts & Handloom, J&K Bank, Fisheries, ICDS and Sheep Husbandry.

These stalls functioned as a one-window solution, providing services such as scheme registrations, enrolment, awareness, grievance redressal, and help desks for the general public.

Following the inspection, the DC and SSP also distributed sanction letters, motorised tricycles and various other entitlements among beneficiaries.

A plantation drive was also organised on the occasion in line with the objectives of Sewa Parv.

Meanwhile, DC Pulwama, SSP Pulwama along with district and sectoral officers paid floral tributes to Mahatma Gandhi.

Delhi govt abolishes income ceiling for Kashmir Migrants

PTI

New Delhi, Oct 02: The Delhi government has decided to abolish the income ceiling for Kashmiri migrants, allowing all such families access to a monthly relief allowance.

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said this move brings a new ray of hope for Kashmiri Hindu families forced to live away from their homes for more than three decades.

The chief minister said that she, along with Education Minister Ashish Sood, met representatives of the displaced community, heard their concerns and directed the Revenue Department to take immediate action.

The income ceiling of Rs 26,800 per month has been abolished. From now onwards, all registered Kashmiri migrant families will receive the allowance regardless of their current income.

“Relief is not charity — it is a rightful entitlement arising from historical displacement, and must be granted on humanitarian grounds,” the chief minister emphasised.

A Special Opportunity Scheme has been introduced, giving

families a one-time chance to update the details of their current members. Records can now be corrected without penalties or recovery of past payments, ensuring transparency and fairness, a statement said.

The government further announced that all pending arrears up to September 2025 will be cleared without delay. At present, around 1,800 Kashmiri migrants reside in the capital. Under the rules, a maximum of four members per family are eligible for support, with each receiving Rs 3,250 per month, amounting to nearly Rs 13,000 for a family.

“This decision will not only make the relief distribution process more efficient but also bring it in line with the provisions already in place in Jammu and Kashmir,” the chief minister said. She added, “Delhi has been their refuge for over 30 years. Now it must also be their home with dignity and security.

“These citizens lost their homes, land and identity, but never compromised their faith in the nation or their culture. For more than three decades, Delhi gave them shelter; now it is our duty to give them respect and protection too.”

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Mahatma Gandhi saw

“With economic prosperity, we are determined to build a society powered by moral force and based on equity and justice,” he added.

LG Sinha also paid homage to former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri on his birth anniversary, recalling his simplicity and dedication to the nation.

The occasion also marked the closing ceremony of Sewa Parv. The Lt Governor congratulated districts and schools for their outstanding performance during the fortnight-long celebrations. He felicitated members of the Gandhi Global Family, Sant Nirankari Mission, and Har Ghar Tiranga Campaign volunteers for their contribution.

Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo; President Gandhi Global Family, J&K, Padma Dr SP Varma; Additional Chief Secretary, Higher Education Department, Shantmanu; Principal Secretary Culture, Brij Mohan Sharma; Secretary, School Education, Ram Niwas Sharma; senior officials, heads of educational institutions, teachers, and students in large number attended the Gandhi Jayanti celebrations. (KNO)

‘Operation Sindoor’

the hostilities ended after the Pakistan Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) reached out to his Indian counterpart and requested for a ceasefire.

The President said the Dussehra festival has always symbolised the triumph of good over evil, humility over arrogance and love over hatred. (KNO)

Who will be NC’s

any discussion regarding the party's candidate for Budgam.

“NC leadership is yet to consult him on the matter,” they added.

They also disclosed that Aga Mehmood, another NC leader with a sizeable vote bank in the segment, is eyeing a Rajya Sabha berth. “Chances of him getting the RS ticket are slim, but his candidature for the Budgam by-election cannot be ruled out,” they said.

It is worthwhile to mention that the by-election is being held after Omar Abdullah vacated the seat last year to retain Ganderbal, a traditional bastion of his family. (KNO)

BRO scripts history

is of immense strategic and infrastructural significance, serving as the third vital axis from the Hanle sector to the border village of Fukehe near the Indo-China border.

The BRO has been instrumental in connecting some of the world's highest mountain passes, with 11 out of the 14 highest motorable passes globally built by it, the statement said.

Beyond its strategic importance, the Mig La Pass is expected to provide a major boost to tourism in Ladakh.

Its breathtaking vistas of the Indus Valley and the exhilarating journey to the pass promise visitors a once-in-a-lifetime experience, the BRO said, adding that while the route presents formidable challenges, it also rewards travelers with unparalleled beauty and adventure.

The achievement stands as a testament to the indomitable spirit, engineering excellence,

and unwavering dedication of the BRO, which continues to push the boundaries of road construction in some of the world's most difficult terrains.

Forces prepared at

into a full-scale war. “Our objective was to target terrorism, not to wage war. We exercised restraint. But we achieved every single military objective. The fight against terrorism will continue,” he added.

He attributed the swift and successful execution of the operation to the jointness of the Army, Navy, and Air Force. “It was the synergy between our three services that made Operation Sindoor a success. When all three work together, there is no challenge we cannot overcome,” Singh said.

Marking Dussehra, Singh performed the traditional worship of weapons, noting that in Indian tradition, weapons are seen not just as tools of war, but as instruments of righteousness. “Weapons are not for show. They are not just symbols of strength; they are used to protect dharma,” he said. (KNO)

3-day wet spell

Middle-altitude areas may experience light snowfall, while the plains of Kashmir are expected to receive moderate to heavy rain.

In the Jammu division, isolated locations are likely to experience heavy to very heavy rainfall, accompanied by thunderstorms, lightning, hailstorms, and strong winds reaching speeds of 40 to 50 kilometres per hour, with gusts of up to 70 kilometres per hour.

The IMD has warned that adverse weather

conditions could lead to significant disruptions in surface transport, particularly along key routes such as the Jammu-Srinagar and Srinagar-Leh National Highways, as well as other roads in the middle and higher reaches.

There is also a possibility of moderate to severe thunderstorms and lightning, which may be accompanied by strong gusty winds at multiple locations.

The probable impacts also include the possibility of landslides, mudslides and shooting stones in vulnerable areas.

The advisory has urged farmers across the region to suspend all farming operations between October 5 and 7 to prevent potential damage to crops and equipment.

With heavy rainfall expected over a short duration, authorities anticipate a rise in water levels in rivers, local streams and nallas, which could lead to waterlogging in low-lying areas. (KNO)

Kashmir to receive

of automobile transport in Jammu and Kashmir.

Earlier in August, a cement rake from Punjab became the first bulk goods train to reach Anantnag. In September, a freight train carried Kashmiri apples from the Valley to markets outside. (KNO)

Police attach

JKNOP Nazir Ahmad Ganie in Village Palpora was attached in presence of police and revenue officials.

This action highlights the commitment of J&K Police to deal firmly with terrorist

handlers and anti-national elements. Such measures aim to dismantle the support structures of terrorist outfits and deter others from unlawful activities besides strengthening the measures which promote peace and order in the district.

Meanwhile, J&K Police requested the community members to cooperate in establishing peace and not to provide any aid or assistance to entities, which are threat to our national security and integrity as strict legal action will follow against individuals found involved in such activities. (KNO)

Srinagar’s Shabir Beigh

craft among the younger generation. “Hardly any youth are willing to learn this work now. Even those who once showed interest have abandoned it midway,” he said.

While the government has introduced certain initiatives for reviving traditional Kashmiri handicrafts, Beigh believes much more needs to be done to safeguard niche forms of art like his.

“The main reason behind the decline is the lack of sustainable income. Without financial support, incentives, and proper promotion, this art could vanish with my generation,” he warned.

Kashmir is renowned worldwide for its exquisite carpets and handicrafts, yet artisans like Beigh remind us that behind every thread lies not just wool or silk, but also identities and cultural memory.

His journey stands as a stark reminder of what could be lost if younger generations do not carry the legacy forward. (KNO)

Other nations’ positions after Pahalgam attack showed who India’s friends are: RSS chief

PTI

Nagpur, Oct 02: Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat on Thursday said the positions taken by various countries after the Pahalgam terror attack showed the nature and extent of their friendship with India.

He was speaking at the RSS’s annual Vijayadashmi rally, which also marked the centenary of the organisation. The RSS was founded on Dussehra (September 27) in 1925 in Nagpur by Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, a physician from Maharashtra.

“Even though we maintain friendly relations with other countries, and we will continue to do so, when it comes to our security, we need to be more careful, more watchful and stronger. After the Pahalgam attack, the positions taken by various countries also revealed which of them are our friends, and to what extent,” Bhagwat said.

He said terrorists crossed the border and killed 26 Indians after checking their



religion in Pahalgam in Jammu and Kashmir, which drew a fitting response from the country, referring to Operation Sindoor. “This caused immense pain and anger in the country. Our government made complete preparations and gave a firm rebuttal. In the aftermath, the leadership’s resolve, the valour of our armed forces and the unity of society were evident,” he said.

He said extremist elements had faced action from the government, while society too distanced itself after recognising their “hollowness”. “They

will be controlled. A major hurdle has now been removed in that area,” the RSS chief said.

He also said that the lack of schemes ensuring justice, development, goodwill, sensitivity and strength often leads to the rise of extremist forces.

“People who are annoyed by the system’s lethargy tend to seek support from such extremist elements. To prevent this, the state and society must work together through initiatives that give people faith in the system,” Bhagwat said.

Former president Ram Nath Kovind was present as the chief guest at the event.

PM hails Bhagwat’s address as ‘inspiring’

New Delhi, Oct 02: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday lauded the annual Vijayadashmi address of RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat as inspiring, and said he highlighted India’s innate potential to attain new heights of glory.

He said on X, “An inspiring address by Param Pujya Sarasangchalak Dr. Mohan Bhagwat Ji, highlighting the rich contributions of the RSS to nation-building and emphasising the innate potential of our land to attain new heights of glory, thereby benefiting our entire planet.”

Modi was an RSS pracharak before he



was moved to the BJP in the 1980s.

In his speech on Thursday in Nagpur, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief

said the strength and character of the Hindu society guarantee unity, and that the concept of “us and them” never existed

in the community.

He advocated swadeshi (use of indigenous products) and swavalamban (self-reliance), and said that the positions of other nations after the Pahalgam terror attack showed the nature and extent of their friendship with India.

Founded on Vijayadashmi in 1925, the RSS is observing its centenary year.

The outfit, started with a few people, has grown to become the country’s most widespread non-government organisation.

The BJP is ideologically inspired by the Hindutva organisation.

PM Modi pays homage to Gandhi, Shastri on birth anniversary

PTI

New Delhi, Oct 02: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday paid his tributes to Mahatma Gandhi on his birth anniversary, and said his government will follow his path for building a developed India.

He said on X, “Gandhi Jayanti is about paying homage to the extraordinary life of beloved Bapu, whose ideals transformed the course of human history. He demonstrated how courage and simplicity could become instruments of great change.” Modi said Gandhi believed in the power of service and compassion as essential means of empowering people. He also paid



homage to India’s second prime minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri, whose birth anniversary, too, fell on Thursday.

He lauded him as an extraordinary statesman whose integrity, humility, and determination

strengthened India.

“He personified exemplary leadership, strength and decisive action. His clarion call of ‘Jai Jawan Jai Kisan’ ignited a spirit of patriotism among our people. He continues to motivate

us in the endeavour of building a strong and self-reliant India,” the prime minister said.

Modi, who has been passionately promoting swadeshi, said buying products made by Indians will be a true tribute

to Gandhi and Shastri. Swadeshi is the foundation of a self-reliant and developed India, he added. Born in Gujarat in 1869, Gandhi is considered the most influential Indian of his era as he shaped the country’s freedom movement through truth and non-violence, winning worldwide following.

Shastri was born in Uttar Pradesh in 1904 and rose to become the country’s prime minister after the death of Jawaharlal Nehru.

His honesty and leadership of the country in his short stint as prime minister during which India fought a war with Pakistan earned him universal praise.

Gandhi Ji’s ideals of truth, non-violence source of inspiration for us: Kharge

IANIS

New Delhi, Oct 02: AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge extending greetings on Thursday on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti and stated that ideals of truth, non-violence, ‘satyagraha’ (passive political resistance) always remain a source of inspiration for us.

Quoting Mahatma Gandhi, Congress chief Kharge stated, “Truth stands, even if there be no public support. It is self-sustained.”

Kharge taking to X, further stated, “The ideals of truth, non-violence, and satyagraha — which showed the path of peace to the entire world — will always remain a source of inspiration for us, as taught by the great architect of the Indian freedom movement and the ‘Father of the Nation’, Mahatma Gandhi.”

“Today, as his principles face challenges, we are confronting them by walking on the path shown by Bapu, guided by his teachings. On this occasion of Gandhi Jayanti, heartfelt



greetings to all fellow citizens,” Kharge stated.

Union Minister for Heavy Industries and Steel, H.D. Kumaraswamy stated, “By showing the path of truth and non-violence to the world and upholding a truthful and principled system of governance, I remember Mahatma Gandhi, the guiding light of humanity, with utmost reverence and devotion.”

“On this day of Bapu ji’s birth anniversary — who remains a timeless inspiration, awareness, and ideal for us, I offer my

heartfelt tributes.”

On the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, the world also observes International Day of Non-Violence.

On the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah garlanded and paid floral tributes to the statue of the ‘Father of the Nation’ at Mahatma Gandhi Circle in Mysuru, and later spoke to the media.

He said, “On October 2, Mahatma Gandhi Jayanti is celebrated. Today, his birth anniversary is celebrated all

over the country and we are trying to emulate the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi and tread his path.”

Mahatma Gandhi led the freedom struggle of the country and he is one of the prominent person’s who brought Independence to this country, CM Siddaramaiah said.

“If at all we are enjoying freedom, it is because of his leadership, sacrifices and martyrdom. I pray that all of us should tread his path and give strength for people to emulate him,” CM Siddaramaiah stated.

“On the same occasion, we are also celebrating the birth anniversary of late Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri today. I will pray for his soul. He was the most honest person. I pray that God give us the courage to move ahead on the path shown by him,” CM Siddaramaiah stated.

“Coincidentally, this year, October 2 is coinciding with the Vijaya Dashami festival. I am extending warm greetings to everyone on this occasion,” CM Siddaramaiah stated.

‘Proud swayamsevak’ Amit Shah lauds RSS for ‘nation-building’, shaping leaders



PTI

New Delhi, Oct 02: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday lauded the RSS on its centenary, saying the organisation’s workers have always been devoted to the service and security of the nation, renouncing all comforts and luxuries.

Shah, who termed himself a “proud swayamsevak”, said that from the leaders at the top to workers at the grassroots, numerous personalities have been shaped by the Sangh over its 100 years.

“Heartfelt congratulations on the centenary year of the world’s largest voluntary organisation, ‘Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh’. In this grand journey of the Sangh centenary, I bow to all the dedicated workers of the RSS who have devoted their lives to the service, security, and empathy of Maa Bharati,” he said in his message.

The home minister said it is not easy being a ‘swayamsevak’ and ‘pracharak’ who must renounce all comforts of life for the nation-building. “Over

100 years, countless swayamsevaks and pracharaks of the Sangh have demonstrated this through sacrifice and dedication,” he said, adding, “I am proud to be a swayamsevak myself.”

Shah said under the leadership of Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, the Sangh, which began in Nagpur on the day of Vijayadashmi in 1925 with a few people, has now become the world’s largest social organisation

He said, be it the Hyderabad liberation struggle, the resistance against the Emergency, or the Goa liberation movement, the RSS has stepped in with its workers to commit to the cause.

He said that with its assistance to brave soldiers in wars, opposition to Article 370 and the anti-infiltrator movement in the Northeast, the RSS took the job of nation-building to new heights.

Be it desert or rugged forests, the inaccessible peaks of the Himalayas or remote villages, the Sangh has everywhere hoisted the flag of devotion and service to the “great sacred land,” he said.

5 side effects of blood pressure medication & how to deal with them

TOI HEALTH

New Delhi, Oct 02: Hypertension is sometimes referred to as the “silent killer”, because it usually does not exhibit any symptoms until it leads to major complications such as stroke, heart attack, or kidney damage. Drugs are a mainstay of therapy, maintaining the blood pressure of millions across the world. Yet, antihypertensives (BP medications), similar to all medications, have side effects.

Although such side effects differ depending on the drug, most can be endured by most without halting them. These medications are always prescribed alongside lifestyle changes as dietary adjustments, stress management or exercise.

While sometimes its effects can be bothersome, it will outweigh the benefits of keeping the blood pressure under control.

Five of the most common side effects of blood pressure meds and the simple strategies for dealing with them are as follows:

Dizziness

The most common side effect is dizziness when standing up abruptly. The reason for this is that drugs such as diuretics, ACE inhibitors, or calcium channel blockers will reduce the blood pressure too quickly. This condition is referred to as orthostatic hypotension.

How to handle: Slowly stand up from lying down or sitting, and ensure that you are properly hydrated. Do not quickly get up from the sitting or reclining

position with jerky movements that will cause a spell of dizziness. If the situation continues, the physician can lower the dosage or switch you to another medication.

Urge to urinate frequently

Diuretics, or “water pills,” are among the most popular drugs for hypertension. They accomplish this by letting your kidneys eliminate salt and water, reducing the level of fluid in the body. The outcome is increased visits to the bathroom.

How to cope with it: The best is to consume the drug in the morning instead of in the evening so as not to break the sleeping habit, because sleep quality is equally essential. Cutting down on caffeine can also help, as caffeine itself has a diuretic effect. If, for some reason, urine excretion is impaired, inquire from the physician if there is a suitable drug that can be taken instead.

Fatigue and weakness

A side effect of beta-blockers or some calcium channel blockers is to make one abnormally weak or fatigued. These medicines decrease the workload of the heart, but sometimes cut back on energy as well.

How to deal with it: Allow the body to get used to it, giving it time as exhaustion will usually get better in some weeks. Adding gentle exercises such as walking or yoga can also enhance energy. If the exhaustion is bad or not getting better, visit your doctor to discuss switching the kind of drug.

Persistent cough

One of the most frequent side effects of ACE (drugs such as lisinopril and enalapril) is a dry, chronic cough. The cough is harmless but is bothersome and interrupts sleep. It is due to the fact that the drug increases the amounts of bradykinin, a chemical that irritates the airways.

How to deal with it: Always alert your doctor prior to stopping the medication. In most cases, switching from an ACE (angiotensin-converting enzyme) blocker to an ARB (angiotensin receptor blocker) like losartan or valsartan fixes the problem.

Swelling, particularly ankles and feet

Calcium channel blockers, especially amlodipine, will cause swelling of the lower legs due to water retention. This is not typically bad but does hurt and is known as peripheral edema, fairly common but not dangerous. If the swelling becomes severe or persistent, it’s important to consult a healthcare provider, as adjusting the dose or switching to a different medication may help alleviate the symptoms.

How to control it: Raising the legs when-sitting, use of compression stockings, and limiting salt consumption can all help. Taking the pill with a weak diuretic or changing to another class of antihypertensive may also be advised by your doctor.

Disclaimer

This is only meant for informational purposes. Before taking any action, please consult a medical professional

IT sector sees subdued growth in FY26, AI-powered rebound in next fiscal



PTI

New Delhi, Oct 02: The Indian IT sector is experiencing subdued growth, with industry guidance and recent results pointing towards a muted outlook for FY26, though a recovery in FY27 is possible with recovery in key export markets and adoption of new technology.

According to HSBC Global Research, near-term discretionary spending among clients remains weak, but there are signs of acceleration in the next fiscal year, especially as adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) among enterprises gathers pace.

“While the near-term demand environment remains soft and unchanged, FY27 is likely to see pick-up in demand driven by recovery in the US macro and increase in demand from IT companies looking to drive enterprise scale AI adoption,” HSBC Global Research said.

Key indicators show that the Indian IT sector has faced challenges related to global macroeconomic uncertainty, client cost optimisation, and delayed decision-making.

Major Indian IT firms such as TCS, Infosys, and HCLTech reported healthy large deal bookings and strong pipelines in the first quarter of FY26, yet actual revenue growth guidance remains restrained at 1.5 per cent for the year.

Geopolitical tensions, supply chain challenges, and industry-specific factors (for example, caution in the BFSI and automotive verticals) continue to cause project deferrals or reduce discretionary spend.

Over the past year, the NSE IT index has underperformed broader Indian market benchmarks, reflecting investor caution amid uncertain growth prospects, even as bookings and deal pipelines remain robust for most large IT companies.

Industry analysis highlights AI as the central driver of the next growth cycle for Indian IT services. Management commentary from leading Indian and global IT firms suggests that most client AI projects to date have focused on productivity improvements but are increasingly shifting towards driving business growth.

Trump offers Qatar unprecedented military protection against attacks

IANIS

Washington, Oct 02: After an Israeli attack on Qatar threatened to unravel the Gulf State's relations with the US and its Gaza peace efforts, President Donald Trump has stepped up with an unprecedented security guarantee offering it military protection against attacks.

White House released on Wednesday (local time) Trump's executive order declaring that the US would treat any attack on Qatar as a threat to itself and would take military action to defend it.

Significantly, the order was signed on Monday, the day when Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was at the White House to meet with Trump.

With Netanyahu at his side, Trump unveiled a peace plan for Gaza that he said had the support of Qatar, other Arab states, and many Muslim-majority countries.



The guarantee draws a red line for Israel, putting Qatar territory off limits for attacks.

The order echoes the NATO treaty that is built on the principle that an attack on one of its members would be treated as an attack on all of them.

However, Trump's guarantee to Qatar is not a treaty, which would require the Senate's approval.

Qatar is an important, if

sometimes truculent, ally of the US, which has a large military base there. Former President Joe Biden designated Qatar a major non-NATO ally in 2022.

Israel attacked a building in Qatar's capital, Doha, on September 9, killing a Qatari internal security staffer, putting Trump in the middle of a fight between two allies. Israel said the attack was aimed at top leaders of Hamas

who were in the complex, but they were unharmed.

The attack embarrassed Trump and questioned US credibility because the Qataris were hosting Hamas leaders for negotiations for peace in Gaza under Washington's aegis.

America said that Israel did not consult with the US before the attack and informed it only minutes before it began, and Washington's alert to Doha was too late.

Qatar is the hub of regional diplomacy, hosting various rival nations or groups, which often puts it in the line of criticism.

The Taliban's representatives carried on their diplomacy from Qatar. Trump's guarantee would protect Qatar from attacks by other countries, too.

Iran attacked the US Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar in June in retaliation for the US attacks on its nuclear facilities. Trump's special envoy for the Middle East, Steve

Witkoff, who is conducting negotiations to end the Gaza conflict, has met with Hamas leaders in Qatar, according to reports.

Israel's attack in Qatar may have been meant to block a Gaza peace deal that would run counter to the ambitions of the Israeli far-right, which backs Netanyahu, to take over the territory and set up Jewish settlements there.

When Netanyahu was at the White House, Trump arranged a call between him and Al Thani for an apology.

The White House said that Netanyahu expressed his regret "that, in targeting Hamas leadership during hostage negotiations, Israel violated Qatari sovereignty and affirmed that Israel will not conduct such an attack".

As a sign of its close relations with Trump, the emirate gifted him a Boeing 747 during his visit there in May, and it has pledged to invest more than \$500 billion in the US during the next decade.

Israeli forces intercept aid flotilla to Gaza

Detain Greta Thunberg, activists



REUTERS

Barcelona, Oct 02: Israeli forces boarded several boats with foreign activists carrying aid to Gaza and took them to an Israeli port on Wednesday, disrupting a protest that had become one of the most high-profile symbols of opposition to Israel's blockade of the enclave.

A video from the Israeli foreign ministry verified by Reuters showed the most prominent of the flotilla's passengers, Swedish climate campaigner Greta Thunberg, sitting on a deck surrounded by soldiers.

"Several vessels of the Hamas-Sumud flotilla have been safely stopped and their passengers are being transferred to an Israeli port," the Israeli foreign ministry said on X. "Greta and her friends are safe and healthy."

The Global Sumud Flotilla, which was carrying medicine and food to Gaza, consisted of more than 40 civilian boats carrying about 500 parliamentarians, lawyers and activists.

Its progress across the Mediterranean Sea had garnered international attention as nations including Turkey, Spain and Italy sent boats or drones in case their nationals required assistance, even as it triggered repeated warnings from Israel to turn back.

Turkey's foreign ministry called Israel's "attack" on the flotilla "an act of terror" that endangered the lives of innocent civilians, and spontaneous protests broke out across Italy in response to the Israeli raid.

The flotilla is the latest sea-borne attempt to break Israel's blockade of Gaza, much of which has been turned into a wasteland by almost two years of war. The flotilla's organisers denounced Wednesday's raid as a "war crime." They said the military used aggressive tactics, including the use of water cannon but that no one was harmed.

"Multiple vessels ... were illegally intercepted and boarded by Israeli Occupation Forces in international waters," the organisers said in a statement.

EU leaders discuss 'drone wall', Ukraine to counter Russia



IANIS

Copenhagen, Oct 02: European Union leaders held an informal summit in Copenhagen, discussing issues including the advancement of an EU-wide "drone wall" and continued support for Ukraine, according to remarks made at a late-evening press conference.

During the informal meeting on Wednesday (local time), European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said the Commission had been given the green light to continue work on the "drone wall" and a rearmament roadmap.

She described the "drone wall" as an anti-drone system designed to "quickly detect, intercept and, if necessary, neutralise drones." European Council President Antonio Costa said leaders had discussed continued support for Ukraine, adding that the conversation would continue

at the next European Council meeting in October, reports Xinhua news agency.

Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen called funding for Kiev an investment in the security of the EU. The informal format meant no binding decisions were expected, though EU institutions and national capitals indicated work would continue on defence initiatives and Ukraine support ahead of the October summit.

The European leaders stayed in Copenhagen for the European Political Community (EPC) summit on Thursday.

In the run-up to the summits, suspected drone activity disrupted flights at airports and triggered heightened security measures. Additionally, earlier on Wednesday, Ukraine received 4 billion euros (about 4.7 billion US dollars) in a European Union loan sourced from frozen Russian assets, according to the country's Ministry of Finance.

US Army secy calls North Korea, China 'basic threats' in region

IANIS

Pyeongtaek (Seoul), Oct 02: US Secretary of the Army Daniel Driscoll has said North Korea and China are both "basic threats" in regional security as President Donald Trump's administration might seek to adjust the role of American troops stationed in South Korea to better counter the threat from China.

Driscoll made the remarks as the decades-long alliance between South Korea and the United States is facing a changing security environment amid speculation over a possible adjustment in the role and scope of the US Forces Korea (USFK) in the face of an increasingly assertive China. "I think the short answer is that both are basic threats," the US Army secretary replied when asked about whether the main purpose of the USFK is North Korea or China.

Driscoll made the remarks at a meeting with reporters at US Army Garrison Humphreys, the USFK's main base, in Pyeongtaek, around 60 kilometres south of Seoul, on Wednesday.

At the same time, Driscoll voiced confidence in the strength of the alliance, which he called "amazing." "The partnership that has lasted so many decades is vitally important," he said.

"We want to be able to, and we know that we can rely on the ROK army as allies in a way that we just can't always have the same confidence in other parts of the world with other allies," ROK



refers to the acronym of South Korea's official name, the Republic of Korea.

Maj. Gen. William Taylor, acting commander of the Eighth Army, echoed the view as he highlighted the need to further strengthen the alliance against evolving threats.

"Our responsibility is to make sure through our mutual defence treaty together that we have the most capable, adaptable and lethal fighting force that's modernised, to look at any evolving threat in the Indo-Pacific," Taylor said during the event.

Against such a backdrop, Driscoll stressed the importance of deploying high-tech assets to the Korean Peninsula.

The US has rolled in a range of advanced weapons systems to South Korea this year, recently confirming the deployment of an Indirect Fire Protection Capability (IFPC) air defence system, dubbed the US version of the Iron Dome, and MQ-9 Reaper drones.

"Our pacing threat is in this part of the world, and in order to

India a passionate football nation, honour to return: Messi

PTI

Kolkata: Lionel Messi on Thursday confirmed his participation in the much-anticipated GOAT Tour of India 2025, calling it an "honour" to revisit the "passionate football nation" country where he last played 14 years ago.

"It is such an honour for me to make this trip. India is a very special country, and I have good memories from my time there 14 years ago — the fans were fantastic. India is a passionate football nation, and I look forward to meeting a new generation of fans while sharing the love I have for this beautiful game," Messi said in an official statement.

The organisers had already unveiled the itinerary on August 15, and Messi's statement on Thursday marked the first time the football icon himself confirmed the visit.

Messi will begin his whirlwind four-city tour in Kolkata on December 13 before travelling to Ahmedabad, Mumbai and New Delhi. The trip will end with a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on December 15.

During the tour, the



Argentine superstar will headline concerts, meet-and-greet sessions, food festivals, football masterclasses, and even a padel exhibition at Mumbai's Brabourne Stadium.

In Kolkata, Messi's event will be held at Salt Lake Stadium which was also confirmed on Thursday.

The stadium will host the legend for the second time this time in the "GOAT Concert" and "GOAT Cup" on December 13, where Messi is expected to share the field with Indian icons Sourav Ganguly, Bhaichung Bhutia and Leander Paes.

Organisers are also planning a 25-foot-high mural to be unveiled during Durga Puja festivities, along with the inauguration of Messi's biggest-ever statue. Tickets

for the events are expected to start from Rs 3,500.

This will be Messi's first visit to India since 2011, when he captained Argentina in a FIFA friendly against Venezuela at the Salt Lake Stadium.

Promoter Satadru Dutta, who secured the authorisation earlier this year after meetings with Messi and his father, has promised a spectacle blending Indian and Argentine culture.

A food and tea festival in Kolkata will highlight Messi's fondness for Argentine made tea, with a special Assam fusion.

In Mumbai, Messi will also attend the "Padel GOAT Cup" and participate in a celebrity line-up that could include Shah Rukh Khan, Sachin Tendulkar, MS Dhoni, and Bollywood stars.

Security arrangements are expected to be unprecedented, with both Messi's team and local authorities involved.

Messi in Kerala too in November?

Even as Messi prepares for his December commitments, the Argentina national football team has included India in its schedule for a November FIFA international window.

The Lionel Scaloni-coached world champions are set to play a friendly in Kerala between November 10-18, though the opponents and venue are yet to be finalised.

If that visit goes ahead, it could mean Messi making two trips to India within two months. However, it remains to be seen whether the 38-year-old forward will feature in the Kerala match.

"I will be surprised if the legendary footballer comes twice in a month. However, it is most likely that the Argentina team minus Messi may come to play in Kerala," a source in the state said.

The November friendly will be part of three games during the window, with the other two scheduled in Angola.

Friday, 3rd October

MOVIES SCHEDULE

COURT ROOM

JOLLY LLB 3

JOLLY LLB 3 (UA16+)

HINDI - 06:45 PM

Revenge: Never Looked This Fiest!

Sunny Sanskari ki Tulsi Kumari

SUNNY SANSKARI KI TULSI KUMARI (UA13+)

HINDI - 03:50 PM, 07:30 PM

KANTARA

KANTARA A LEGEND: CHAPTER 1 (UA16+)

HINDI - 04:00 PM

HINDI ATMOS - 02:30 PM, 06:00 PM

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