

FROM PAGE ONE

Usual prevarication: India on Pakistan's collision allegation

cluding on civilians and economic assets." Jaiswal registered India's concerns, noting that the on-going attacks undermine regional security while threatening the freedom of navigation through key international maritime routes such as the Bab al-Mandeb.

Terming the ongoing escalation in hostilities as "totally unacceptable," the MEA spokesperson expressed hopes for early restoration of peace in the war-torn region.

"We are deeply concerned about the escalation in the security situation in the Red Sea area... We have expressed our condemnation of the attacks on Saudi sovereign territory, including on civilians and economic assets. You would have also seen a statement which we issued following the attempted attack on the holy city of Makkah," he said.

"Such attacks vitiate regional security, impact or undermine regional peace and security, and also threaten freedom of navigation through the Bab al-Mandab. For various reasons, this is totally unacceptable to us. We hope that there is an early restoration of peace and stability in the region," he added.

Additionally, the MEA has reiterated its commitment to the safety and welfare of Indian nationals abroad following an appeal regarding Indramani Nautiyal, a resident of Tehri Garhwal, Uttarakhand, who is reportedly being kept in a hostage-like situation in Saudi Arabia. Nautiyal reportedly faces ongoing detention due to an unpaid penalty of Rs 2.29 crore levied on the company he worked for following a road accident in 2018.

The MEA spokesperson stated that the government was actively monitoring the situation through Indian diplomatic channels.

"Whenever any issue of this nature arises involving an Indian citizen-concerning their interests or their welfare-our embassy, whether in Saudi Arabia or any other country, remains in continuous dialogue with the government there for their welfare and care," he said.

When asked about the exact legal status and current condition of Nautiyal, he noted that specific case details were being gathered.

"In this case, you mentioned that he has received a prison sentence; currently, I do not have a specific response for you regarding what his exact situation is, but I will obtain the details on this matter and update you," Jaiswal added.

Reaffirming the Ministry's broader stance on overseas citizens, Jaiswal emphasised India's diplomatic commitment to consular care.

"However, one thing I want to state is that wherever Indian citizens may be across the world, it is our commitment that we are always devoted to their safety, care, and well-being," he said.

Navigational rights must not be subject to threats: India

"Rights and freedoms of navigation and overflight should be consistent with international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and must be fully respected. Commercial vessels must not become targets of geopolitical tensions."

He also said, "Equally vital are coordinated evacuation frameworks for seafarers in conflict zones, with clear responsibilities among States and international organisations."

With seafarers coming under direct attack in the current conflict and India losing several maritime crew, Parvathaneni said seafarers must remain at the centre of the international community's collective efforts.

"Their safety, timely evacuation, medical assistance, crew changes and repatriation require effective contingency planning and international cooperation. Their Safety and Security require much greater attention in the present circumstances," he said, while calling on countries with a major stake in shipping safety and seafarer security to work together.

He also said India recognises the growing importance of addressing emerging threats such as attacks involving unmanned systems, cyber risks and interference with navigation and communications, and stressed that international cooperation, capacity-building and the responsible use of technology would be critical.

Overall, India told the UNSC that protecting freedom of navigation, safeguarding seafarers and preparing maritime systems to withstand shocks must remain central to the global response.

J&K, Ladakh HC sets up resident office in New Delhi

Standing Counsel and other counsels engaged on behalf of the high court before the Supreme Court, besides monitoring the progress of cases involving high court and ensure timely transmission of records, instructions, comments & responses.

2 killed as earth caves in

two labourers lost their lives, officials said. The dead were identified as Abdul Rashid of Kishtwar and Pawan Kumar of Jharkhand. Three others, who were found injured, were shifted to a hospital, officials said.

Woman among 3 held with 500 gold coins

Three persons, including a woman, on board the vehicle were taken into custody, the officials added. Further investigation was in progress.

GOC visits encounter site in Majalta woods

Doda and Kishtwar and parts of Udhampur. "GOC White Knight Corps, accompanied by GOC of Delta Force, visited Brattalto review the ongoing counter terrorism operationand assess the situation on ground," officials said. "The Corps Commander reviewed the evolving security environment, operational dynamics and measures to sustain relentless operational tempo, ensuring a swift, coordinated and decisive response to emerging threats," White Knight Corps said in a post on X.

It said the GOC commended the successful neutralisation of two terrorists and lauded the troops of White Knight Corps for their resolute action, high morale and unwavering commitment.

Two JeM terrorists were killed and an OGW was detained during an anti-terror operation in the forests of Brattal Sohan in the Majalta area of Udhampur on Wednesday night.

A large cache of arms and ammunition, including a US-made M4 carbine, were recovered from the slain terrorists.

Saxena inaugurates Sea Buckthorn Conclave

Buckthorn from Rs 150/kg last year to a minimum of Rs 300/kg this year, effecting a massive increase of 100 pc.

Inaugurating the first two-day International Sea Buckthorn Conclave, Saxena said this significant increase in production price was essentially aimed at increasing the income of farmers and local communities engaged in production of Sea Buckthorn - the wonder berry of Ladakh. He also released a postal cover featuring Ladakh's Sea Buckthorn, marking the recognition of the region's distinctive natural resource and its growing identity.

The Sea Buckthorn Conclave is bringing together 20 top buyers and around 120 MSME-registered entrepreneurs and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) involved in the Sea Buckthorn ecosystem, along with technical experts, scientists, researchers and entrepreneurs from Mongolia, Vietnam and Arunachal Pradesh, providing an opportunity to exchange knowledge and learn from experiences in developing Sea Buckthorn as an economic resource.

Currently, wild sea buckthorn grows in dense, thorny bushes, making extraction so difficult that almost 85 pc of the annual crop is wasted. To improve this stark 15 pc commercial utilisation rate, Saxena directed boosting crop recovery to at least 50 pc this year, with a strict target of achieving 100 pcutilisation by next year, by adopting modern harvesting techniques, so as to meet the growing demand for Sea Buckthorn across the country.

He stressed that improved harvesting techniques, value addition, packaging and market linkages are essential to achieving this goal.

"At present, Sea Buckthorn grows naturally across Ladakh, which often makes harvesting difficult for farmers. In coming times, we will be promoting the cultivation of Sea Buckthorn in a curated manner, so as to harvest maximum produce out of it. A comprehensive action plan is being chalked out to develop a complete value chain within Ladakh - right from cultivation, harvest, processing, packaging and marketing - so that a larger share of the economic value reaches the local farmers, entrepreneurs and local communities," he said.

Saxena highlighted harvesting as one of the major challenges confronting Sea Buckthorn farmers in Ladakh. At present, much of the resource grows naturally, and extracting berries from thorny bushes is difficult, labour-intensive and time-consuming, resulting in a significant loss of the produce.

Thanking Prime Minister Narendra Modi for giving international recognition to Sea Buckthorn by calling it a "Sanjeevani" during his "Mann ki Baat" programme, the LG said that the GI registration of Ladakh Sea Buckthorn was an important milestone in establishing its identity, authenticity and brand value in national and international markets.

He also noted its inclusion under the One District One Product initiative for Leh district, which has provided further impetus to the sector.

Notably, the Union Ministry of Agriculture, on the request of LG Saxena, has also constituted a high-level committee to examine the establishment of a dedicated National Sanjeevani Research Centre in Nubra Valley for research, development, genetic improvement, propagation, harvesting, and value addition of Sea Buckthorn.

Breaking away from conventional conference halls, the Sea Buckthorn Conclave has been hosted amidst the natural ambience of the Choglamsar forest - Sea Buckthorn grows extensively, thereby providing delegates with an immersive, on-ground experience of witnessing the plant's native habitat and the natural growth patterns.

Spiritual journeys strengthen collective consciousness: LG

In his address, he called the yatra a sacred bridge between India's glorious past and the vibrant present.

"J&K has, for millennia, been nourished by an unbroken stream of faith, with every step of its land imbued with spiritual energy, as highlighted by Kalhana in the Rajatarangini," he said.

Quoting from the Nilamata Purana, the LG noted that Mount Harmukh, also known as Harmukut, is revered as the abode of Almighty Shiva, while Gangbal Lake at 14,500 ft is regarded as the sacred presence of Mother Ganga.

"Despite difficult terrain and historical upheavals, devotees have preserved their spiritual bond with this pilgrimage site, which is also associated with paying homage to ancestors, comparable in sanctity to Haridwar," he said.

He emphasised that Himalayan pilgrimages teach humility before nature and inspire noble thoughts from all directions, fostering social harmony.

"I firmly believe that the Harmukh-Gangbal pilgrimage is a living expression of this immortal faith. On the pilgrimage, no one is superior or inferior. All are seekers of truth, united in spirituality. This is the strength of our eternal culture," he said.

Highlighting the relevance of pilgrimage in contemporary times, Sinha urged pilgrims to pledge to protect nature, especially in the context of climate change and environmental challenges.

"I often say that Himalayan pilgrimages teach us two important lessons. First, I am not the master of nature but its custodian. Second, noble and beneficial thoughts should come to us from all directions so that we may make society more prosperous. I believe that, in our eternal culture, pilgrimage has always been a great force for social harmony," he said.

"Pilgrimage gives us that strength and self-confidence. At the same time, it brings us closer to nature. During the journey, we realise that nature is our heritage and that we have a responsibility towards it," he added.

"The Harmukh-Gangbal pilgrimage is also giving us an opportunity to tell our younger generations that our eternal culture represents not only the consciousness of the present but also the direction of the future," he said.

The LG also referred to the ongoing Seva Sankalp Abhiyan, dedicated to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 25 years of continuous public service. He appealed to the citizens and the Harmukh Ganga Gangbal Trust to actively participate in activities such as cleanliness drives, blood donation camps, health camps, tree plantation drives, and youth programmes.

"May the snow-clad peaks of Harmukh inspire us to cultivate lofty thoughts, and may the blessings and compassion of Almighty Shiva remain with all the pilgrims," he said.

Among those present on the occasion included MP Mian Altaf Ahmad, MLA Mian Mehar Ali, LG's principal secretary Mandeep KBhandari, Harmukh Ganga Gangbal Trust's founder chairman & general secretary Vinod Pandita, divisional commissioner (Kashmir) Anshul Garg, IGP Sujit Kumar, deputy commissioner, Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore, Anil Bhat and other members of the trust, religious heads, senior civil and police officers, security officials, prominent citizensand devotees.

Birthday boy kills friend for smearing cake on his face

cials said while other friends - John Sotra, Gaurav Singh & Sugandh Bhatti - tried to pacify him, he took out a 'khokri', which he was carrying with him, and allegedly attacked Nair on his neck, causing him a grievous injury.

Sotra, Gaurav & Bhatti then shifted Nair to the GMCH, where he was declared brought dead by the doctors, officials said.

cials said.

At about 9 pm, the GMCH police post called up Janipura police station and brought the matter to their notice. A police team was immediately rushed to hospital, officials said.

After preliminary inquiry, police registered a murder case and arrested Neeraj and his brother Rishu who was accompanying him when the incident took place, the officials added.

Nair's body was later shifted to the hospital mortuary for post-mortem. Further investigation into the case was in progress.

J&K Bank renews MoU with Tata Motors as preferred financier

the shared commitment of two trusted institutions to making commercial mobility more accessible and affordable. By combining Tata Motors' diversified product portfolio and extensive dealership network with J&K Bank's deep regional understanding and customer-centric financing solutions, we aim to support transporters, fleet operators, small businesses, and aspiring entrepreneurs in acquiring vehicles suited to their business requirements."

He added, "While this partnership strengthens transportation capacity across vital sectors such as logistics, construction, infrastructure, mining, agriculture, and passenger mobility in J&K and Ladakh, its pan-India scope aligns with the Bank's expanding footprint and commitment to serving customers nationwide."

VP & Business Head (SCV) Tata Motors Limited, Pinaki Haldar said, "J&K Bank has been a valued financing partner with a strong understanding of customer requirements, particularly across J&K and Ladakh. The renewed partnership will help us offer customers easier access to finance across our commercial vehicle portfolio while enabling faster coordination among the company, its authorised dealers, and the Bank. We look forward to further strengthening this association and supporting customers in their business and mobility aspirations."

Notably, Tata Motors offers a comprehensive portfolio comprising Heavy Commercial Vehicles, Intermediate and Light Commercial Vehicles, Small Commercial Vehicles, pick-ups, tippers, buses, and special-application vehicles serving the logistics, construction, infrastructure, mining, agriculture, and passenger-transportation sectors.

The MoU ceremony was attended from the Bank by Deputy General Manager (RAM) Abdul Majid Bhat; Assistant General Managers (RAM) Ishfaq Ahmad Hakak and Gh Nabi Dar.

Representing Tata Motors and its dealer network were Regional Manager Vishal Mahey, Area Manager Vishal Sood, RCFI Sabin Chandran, TSM Varun Bhalla, Rohit Gandotra from Fairdeal Motors, and Parvaiz Katto from KY Auto.

Blast rips through mosque; 21 killed, 80 injured

where they were killed. Around three others went to the Special Branch building.

An initial handout from IG Hameed said the explosion occurred at a mosque at Kohat Police Lines, adding that initial reports suggested an explosive-laden vehicle was rammed into the building.

He added that at least seven attackers then infiltrated the compound, moving towards the CTD and Special Branch facilities. A police statement noted that law enforcement personnel killed six attackers, including one suicide bomber.

At least one remaining attacker was subsequently cornered, leading police forces to initiate a clearance operation. By approximately 3:30 pm, police stated that the clearance operation was "in its final stages."

"The operation will continue until the complete elimination of Fitna-ul-Khawarij," the IG was quoted as saying, while adding that the morale of the police remained high.

Fitna al Khawarij is a term the Pakistani state uses for terrorists belonging to the organisation Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

Separately, KP Chief Minister Sohail Afridi sought a detailed report on the incident, saying the targeting of innocent citizens was "deeply regrettable and unacceptable," as per a statement issued by his office.

He directed authorities to ensure immediate treatment for the injured. "The nation's morale cannot be dampened by cowardly acts of terrorism," he said.

According to Rescue 1122 Khyber Pakhtunkhwa spokesperson Bilal Ahmad Faizi, rescue teams reached the site shortly after receiving the information and launched a rescue operation.

He said several of those injured were shifted to nearby hospitals for initial medical treatment.

The spokesperson said rescue teams were present at the scene and assessing the situation.

Omar hopes deliberations will shape J&K's financial pathways

and renewable energy, advancing sustainable and inclusive development," the chief minister's office said in a post on X.

Modi, UAE Prez discuss key issues

Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, including in the areas of energy, defence, technology, investment and health.

"Grateful to my brother, the President of UAE, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, for his call and birthday wishes. We discussed measures to further deepen our bilateral Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and exchanged views on efforts to promote regional peace, security and stability," Modi said in a post on X.

DDC Reasi reviews implementation of District Capex, Tribal Plan

REASI, SEPTEMBER 18:

District Development Commissioner Reasi Kumar Abhishek today chaired a review meeting to assess the progress of development works undertaken under the District Capex Budget and Tribal Plan in the district.

The DDC reviewed the physical and financial progress under the District Capex Budget and took stock of the status of works being executed across vari-

ous sectors, including Jal Shakti, PWD (R&B), Education, Health and Urban Development. He also reviewed the department-wise status of new works, including sanctioning, tendering, allotment, commencement and completion.

The meeting also reviewed the implementation of the Tribal Plan, with the DDC undertaking a detailed assessment of ongoing and new works, preparation of DPRs, technical sanctions and execution by various implementing

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi received a telephone call from His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates. The UAE President conveyed warm greetings on the Prime Minister's birthday," the statement said.

The prime minister turned 76 on Thursday.

The two leaders exchanged views on developments in West Asia, and they reaffirmed their commitment to continued cooperation and coordination in efforts to promote regional peace, security and stability, the statement said.

The UAE President also congratulated the Prime Minister on India's successful BRICS Presidency.

Modi appreciated the participation of UAE Crown Prince Sheikh Khalid in the BRICS Summit and the UAE's cooperation and partnership in achieving substantive outcomes under India's presidency.

Delays in def projects can lead to 'technology obsolescence': Rajnath

2010.

The IAF had placed the first order for 20 Tejas Mk1 aircraft on 31 March 2006, comprising 16 fighters and four trainers, with deliveries scheduled to be completed by December 2011.

On 23 December 2010, the IAF placed another order for 20 Mk1 aircraft in FOC configuration, comprising 16 fighters and four trainers. The contractual deadline for this order was December 2016.

The delivery of the final two trainers therefore comes almost 10 years after the contractual deadline for the second order.

The IAF ordered 83 Mk1As-73 fighters and 10 trainers-from HAL in 2021 for around Rs 48,000 crore. Under the contract, the first aircraft was to be delivered within three years, by February 2024, with the entire order to be completed over nine years.

The first Mk1A, LA-5033, however, made its maiden flight only in March 2024. More than two years later, HAL is yet to hand over a single Mk1A to the IAF.

Army Chief discusses bilateral def cooperation with Russian counterpart

Headquarters, where interactions were held on issues of mutual interest, focused on deepening military cooperation, expanding training engagements and strengthening capability development between the two Armies," the post added.

Earlier on Wednesday, GenSeth began an official three-day visit to Russia aimed at further strengthening the long-standing India-Russia defence partnership and military-to-military cooperation.According to an official release issued by the Ministry of Defence, General Seth is visiting Russia from September 16 to September 18.

The visit comes against the backdrop of longstanding military-technical cooperation between India and Russia, which has evolved from a buyer-seller relationship towards joint research, development and production of advanced defence technologies and systems.

The Army Chief will also travel to Saint Petersburg, where he is scheduled to visit the Mikhailovskaya Military Artillery Academy and interact with its leadership and faculty.

The Ministry of Defence said the visit "reflects the importance attached by both countries to sustained military diplomacy and Army-to-Army engagement".

The interactions are expected to further deepen military cooperation and reinforce the enduring defence relationship between India and Russia.

Russia remains an important source for India's defence equipment, engines, spare parts and components.

Rlys to run 3 special trains to meet festival rush

"The Railway has decided to operate three pairs of reserved festival special trains via Jammu Division. The operation of these trains will not only make it easier for passengers to secure confirmed tickets but will also ensure a more comfortable and safe journey," he said.

He said the first train, 04604/04603 Katra-Varanasi-Katra Special, would make nine trips in each direction.

The train departing from Katra will run every Sunday from October 4 to November 29, at 6.15 pm, while the train departing from Varanasi will run every Tuesday from October 6 to December 1 at 4.30 am, the spokesman said.

He said that the train will halt at Jammu Tawi, Pathankot Cantt, Jalandhar Cantt, Ludhiana, Ambala Cantt, Saharanpur, Moradabad, Bareilly, Alamnagar, Rae Bareli and Pratappgarh, among other stations.

The spokesman said the second train, 04610/04609 Jammu Tawi-Varanasi-Jammu Tawi Special, will also make nine trips in each direction.

Train 04610 will run every Thursday from October 1 to November 26, while 04609 will operate every Friday from October 2 to November 27, providing additional connectivity to passengers from Pathankot, Jalandhar, Ambala, Saharanpur, Moradabad, Shahjahanpur, Lucknow and Sultanpur.

The third train, 04081/04082 New Delhi-Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra Festival Special, will make four trips in each direction to meet the Dussehra rush.

Train 04081 will operate on October 8, 9, 10 and 11, while 04082 will run on October 9, 10, 11 and 12, providing direct connectivity between New Delhi and Katra.

The spokesman said these trains will directly connect two of the most important religious places in North India, besides providing direct and fast connectivity to commuters from Delhi, Haryana and Punjab.

He said running of these trains would reduce pressure on regular trains and will provide relief to passengers from the rush for tickets during festivals.

agencies. He stressed the need for timely completion of all sanctioned works and effective utilisation of available resources.

The DDC directed the concerned officers to expedite the tendering process and furnish updated status reports indicating the progress of works and the status of tendering. He further instructed the officers to initiate requisite action for foreclosure of works where no progress has been recorded, in accordance with the prescribed procedures. Emphasising

the need for effective monitoring and timely implementation, he directed the concerned agencies to accelerate the pace of execution and ensure completion of all sanctioned works within the stipulated timelines. Chief Planning Officer Narinder Kumar, Chief Medical Officer, Executive Engineers of Jammu Power Distribution Corporation Limited and Jal Shakti Department, Block Development Officers and other concerned officers were present in the meeting.