

Army launches mission connectivity in Sikkim

SIKKIM, Oct 10 (ANI)

TROOPS of the Trishakti Corps Indian Army have started an operation as part of their massive efforts to reestablish surface travel connectivity in North Sikkim.

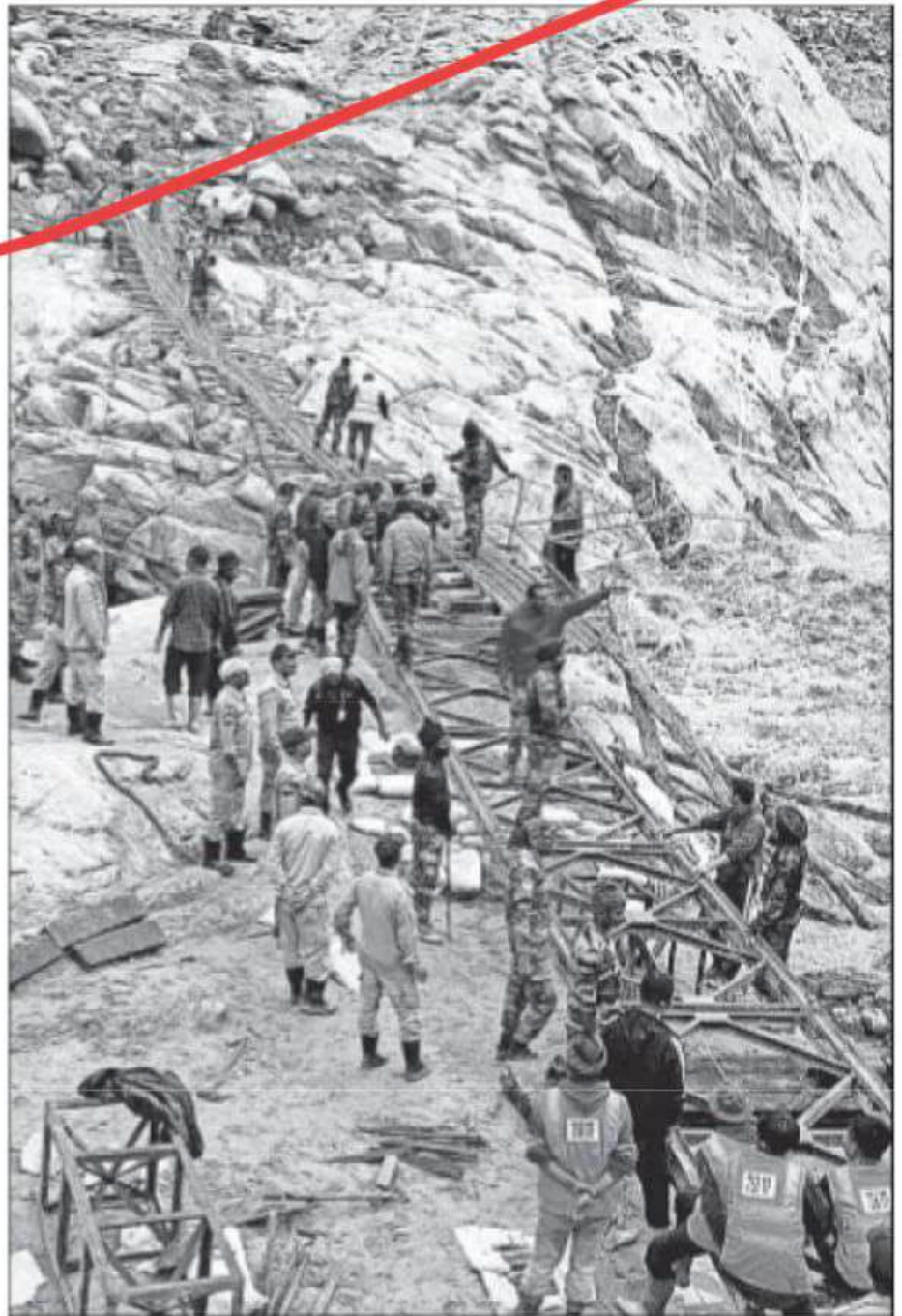
The region suffered significant disruptions due to the recent flash floods that inflicted damage on footbridges, roads, and other infrastructure.

The Trishakti Troops are also getting support from the Border Roads Organisation (BRO), the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), and locals of the affected areas in their efforts to reconnect isolated villages in the region.

"In an effort to reconnect North Sikkim, troops of Trishakti Corps Indian Army along with BRO, ITBP & locals of the area are undertaking extensive operations to restore connectivity. New footbridges are being laid and restoration work is underway to reconnect Sikkim," Trishakti Corps said in a post on X.

The focus of the operations is towards restoring connectivity to North Sikkim through Chungthang, which was the worst affected during the devastating flood that occurred after the landslides, the Indian Army said earlier.

Troops of the Indian Army undertook a challenging oper-



Troops of Indian Army's Trishakti Corps along with Border Roads Organisation and Indo-Tibetan Border Police lay the new foot bridge to restore connectivity in the flood-hit North Sikkim on Monday. (ANI)

ation through difficult terrain and have reached the isolated village of Rabom, North

West of Chungthang and rescue of 150-200 civilians are underway.

India to build 509 composite border outposts on frontiers with Pak, B'desh

■ By **Rajnish Singh**

NEW DELHI, Oct 10 (ANI)

INDIA is all set to build 509 composite border outposts (BOPs) along India-Pakistan and India-Bangladesh borders to provide an appropriate show of force to deter trans-border criminals, infiltrators and hostile elements from indulging in the activities of intrusion or encroachment and border violations.

Of the 509 composite BOPs, 383 are to be constructed along the India-Bangladesh border while the remaining 126 BOPs will be built along the India-Pakistan border.

These composite BOPs will be very helpful for the personnel of the Border Security Force (BSF)-- which is mandated to guard the 3,323 km India-Pakistan border and 4,096.7 km India-Bangladesh border.

Union Ministry of Home Affairs has given its consent for a scheme of 509 composite BOPs which would be provided with infrastructure for accommodation, logistic support and combat functions with the latest equipment.

The latest annual report of

the Ministry of Home Affairs, released last week, mentions the move, pointing to "the Government of India approved a scheme of 509 Composite BOPs (total BOPs along Indo-Pakistan and Indo-Bangladesh borders). Out of 509 Composite BOPs, 383 Composite BOPs are to be constructed along the Indo-Bangladesh Border."

A composite BOP would have at least one jawans barrack, one kitchen, one dining hall, one garage, one generator room, one toilet block, one administrative block, one wireless room, one weapons room and six cemented bunkers to resist any attack and also medical facilities. An official told ANI that composite BOPs will help in a better work environment for jawans and also strengthen the dominance of the force in the area.

A Composite BOP is different from a normal BOP in terms of facilities and infrastructure. BOPs are the main workstation of the BSF along the borders. These are self-contained defence outposts with a specified area of responsibility established along the entire continuum of land borders.

THE ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR: NO MATTER WHO LOSES, IRAN WINS

■ BY AARON PILKINGTON

THERE will be only one winner in the war that has broken out between Israel and the Palestinian militant group Hamas. And it is neither Israel nor Hamas.

In an operation coined "the Al-Aqsa Storm," Hamas, whose formal name is the Islamic Resistance Movement, fired thousands of rockets into Israel on October 7, 2023. Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad fighters infiltrated Israel by land, sea and air. Hundreds of Israelis have been killed, more than 2,000 injured, and many taken hostage.

In response, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared war on Hamas and launched airstrikes in Gaza. In the first day of reprisals, close to 400 Palestinians were killed, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry.

In the weeks ahead, the Israeli military will surely retaliate and kill hundreds more Palestinian militants and civilians. As an analyst of Middle-East politics and security, I believe that thousands on both sides will suffer. But when the smoke settles, only one country's interests will have been served: Iran's.

Already, some analysts are suggesting that Tehran's fingerprints can be seen on the surprise attack on Israel. At the very least, Iran's leaders have reacted to the assault with encouragement and support.

The decisive factor shaping Iran's foreign policy was the 1979 overthrow of the US-friendly, repressive Shah of Iran and the transfer of state power into the hands of a Shiite Muslim revolutionary regime. That regime was defined by stark anti-American imperialism and anti-Israeli Zionism.

The revolution, its leaders claimed, was not just against the corrupt Iranian monarchy; it was intended to confront oppression and injustice everywhere, and especially those governments backed by the United States – chief among them, Israel.

For Iran's leaders, Israel and the United States represented immorality, injustice and the greatest threat to Muslim society and Iranian security. The

Since the early 1980s, Iran has maintained support for anti-Israeli militant groups and operations. The Islamic Republic has publicly pledged millions of dollars of annual support to groups and provides advanced military training for thousands of Palestinian fighters at Revolutionary Guard and Hezbollah bases in Iran and Lebanon



An Israeli soldier prays next to a tank at a staging ground near the Israeli Gaza border, southern Israel on Monday. (AP/PTI)

enduring hostility felt toward Israel is in no small part due to its close ties with the shah and Israel's role in his sustained oppression of the Iranian people. Together with the US Central Intelligence Agency, Israel's intelligence service, the Mossad, helped organise the shah's secret police and intelligence service, the SAVAK.

This organisation relied on increasingly harsh tactics to put down dissenters during the shah's last two decades in power, including mass imprisonment, torture, disappearances, forced exile and killing thousands of Iranians.

Support for Palestinian liberation was a central theme of Iran's revolutionary message.

Since the early 1980s, Iran has maintained support for anti-Israeli militant groups and operations. The Islamic Republic has publicly pledged millions of dollars of annual support to groups and provides advanced military training for thousands of Palestinian fighters at

Revolutionary Guard and Hezbollah bases in Iran and Lebanon.

Iran runs a sophisticated smuggling network to funnel weapons into Gaza, which has long been cut off from the outside world by an Israeli blockade.

Israeli-Palestinian conflicts and death tolls have escalated steadily since 2020. Palestinians are outraged by increased evictions and destruction of property, and how Israel allows Israeli nationalists and settlers to violate a long-standing agreement preventing Jewish prayer at the Al-Aqsa Mosque – a site holy to both Muslims and Jews. In fact, a recent incursion by settlers into Al-Aqsa was specifically cited by Hamas as a justification for the October 7 attack. That is not to say that Iran ordered Hamas' attack on Israel, nor that Iran controls Palestinian militants – they are not Iranian puppets. Nevertheless, Iran's leaders welcomed the attacks, the timing of which serendipitously works in Iran's

favour and plays into the Islamic republic's regional battle for influence.

The week before the Hamas attack, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman denied reports that Saudi Arabia had paused its recent efforts to normalise relations with Israel, which includes a formal declaration of Israel's right to exist and increased diplomatic engagement. "Every day we get closer," he said, an assessment praised and echoed by Netanyahu.

Israeli-Saudi normalisation would represent the pinnacle of achievement thus far in US diplomatic efforts, including the Abraham Accords, signed by Israel, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Morocco in 2020. The accords aimed to normalise and build peaceful relations between Israel and Arab countries across the Middle East and in Africa.

There are at least three possible outcomes to the war, and they all play in Iran's favour.

First, Israel's heavy-handed response may turn off Saudi Arabia and other Arab states to US-backed Israeli normalisation efforts. Second, if Israel deems it necessary to push further into Gaza to eradicate the threat, this could provoke another Palestinian uprising in East Jerusalem or the West Bank, leading to a more widespread Israeli response and greater instability.

Lastly, Israel could achieve its first two objectives with the minimal amount of force necessary, foregoing usual heavy-handed tactics and reducing chances of escalation. But this is unlikely. And even if this occurred, the underlying causes that led to this latest outbreak of violence, and the enabling role Iran plays in that process, have not been addressed. And when the next round of Israeli-Palestinian violence occurs – and it will – I believe Iran's leaders will again congratulate themselves for a job well done.

(The Conversation)

(The writer is a PhD candidate at Korbel School of International Studies, University of Denver)

IMF raises India's GDP growth forecast marginally to 6.3 per cent for FY24

- With the property market crisis in that country, lower investment is the main contributor to the revision, it said

NEW DELHI, Oct 10 (PTI)

INTERNATIONAL Monetary Fund (IMF) on Tuesday raised India's GDP projection marginally by 0.2 per cent to 6.3 per cent even as it slashed the global growth forecast to 3 per cent.

IMF in July had estimated India's GDP forecast at 6.1 per cent for 2023-24. However, this is lower than the RBI's latest estimate of 6.5 per cent for the current financial year.

However, India's growth is projected to be higher than

China's, the second-largest economy in the world.

IMF's 'World Economic Outlook' revised China's growth forecast downward by 0.2 percentage points for 2023 and by 0.3 percentage points for 2024 to 5 per cent and 4.2 per cent, respectively.

With the property market crisis in that country, lower investment is the main contributor to the revision, it said.

"Growth in India is projected to remain strong, at 6.3 per cent in both 2023 and 2024, with an upward revision of 0.2 percentage point for 2023, reflecting stronger-than-expected consumption during April-June," the 'World Economic Outlook' said.

Monetary policy projections are consistent with achieving the Reserve Bank of India's

inflation target over the medium term, it noted.

The Government has mandated the Reserve Bank of India to keep CPI inflation at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on either side.

Observing that the food security concerns prompted recent export restrictions in the world's largest rice exporter India, it said, risks to prices are tilted to the upside, stemming mostly from the ramifications of the end of the Black Sea Grain Initiative and uncertain effects of El Nino, possibly exacerbated by the proliferation of food export restrictions.

"While India's oil exports (mostly petroleum products) are small relative to its oil imports (mostly crude oil), India increased its oil exports to the European Union substantially," it said.

First Gaganyaan test flight on October 21

NEW DELHI, Oct 10 (PTI)

THE Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will carry out the first of several test flights ahead of the Gaganyaan mis-

sion on October 21, Science and Technology Minister Jitendra Singh said on Tuesday.

The test vehicle development flight (TV-D1) will be conducted at the Satish Dhawan

Space Centre in Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh to test the crew module that is scheduled to house Indian astronauts during the human spaceflight late next year.

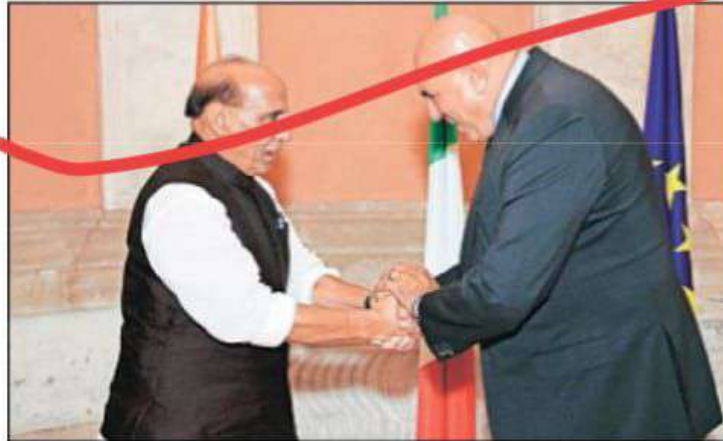
India, Italy ink pact to strengthen defence ties

NEW DELHI, Oct 10 (PTI)

INDIA and Italy inked an agreement to expand their defence ties including for co-development and co-production of military platforms following wide-ranging talks between Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and his Italian counterpart Guido Crosetto in Rome.

Singh is in Italy on the first leg of his two-nation tour. From Italy, the minister will be travelling to France.

In a statement on Tuesday, the Defence Ministry said the focus of the talks between Singh and Crosetto on Monday was on defence-industrial cooper-



Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh meets Italian Defence Minister Guido Crosetto in Rome on Monday. (PTI)

ation and that the pact will help promote co-development, co-

production and setting up of joint ventures.

"The agreement will promote bilateral cooperation in varied defence domains, such as security and defence policy, research and development, education in the military field, maritime domain awareness, sharing of defence information and industrial cooperation, including co-development, co-production and setting up of joint ventures," it said.

The signing of the pact is seen as a major initiative to expand the defence cooperation that came nearly two years after the Defence Ministry lifted the ban on AgustaWestland and its parent company Leonardo SpA.

Modi condemned terror in all forms, raised safety of Indians in Israel: PMO

SHUBHAJIT ROY

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 10

IN THEIR first phone conversation since the Hamas attack on Israel, Prime Minister Narendra Modi told Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu Tuesday that "people of India stand in solidarity with Israel in this difficult hour".

Thanking Netanyahu "for his phone call and providing an update on the ongoing situation", Modi, in a post on X later, said "India strongly and unequivocally condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations" — remarks reiterated in a statement by the Prime Minister's Office.

While this was their first phone conversation since Saturday, when Hamas targeted Israeli civilians in perhaps the bloodiest attack since the formation of the State of Israel in 1948, Modi's underlying message was in sync with what he had said soon after the attack.



Netanyahu, Modi: their first phone call since attack

THE WORLD

AS WAR RAGES, AID GROUPS SCRAMBLE TO REACH GAZA

EXPLAINED

WHY CAREGIVERS FROM INDIA GO TO ISRAEL

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"Deeply shocked by the news of terrorist attacks in Israel. Our thoughts and prayers are with the innocent victims and their

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Israel mobilises 3,00,000 reservists; 'restores full control' over border

- Death toll rises to 1,600
- Bodies of over 1,500 Hamas militants found, says Israel military

■ **By Josef Federman and Issam Adwan**

JERUSALEM, Oct 10 (AP)

ISRAELI warplanes pounded downtown Gaza City, home to Hamas' centres of government, with relentless bombardments into early on Tuesday, after Israel's prime minister vowed retaliation against the Islamic militant group that would "reverberate for generations."

The 4-day-old war has already claimed at least 1,600 lives, as Israel saw gun battles in the streets of its

Israeli PM calls Modi

NEW DELHI, Oct 10 (PTI)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi was briefed by his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu on the ongoing situation as his country carries out retaliatory strikes against Hamas.

India strongly and unequivocally condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, Modi said on Tuesday. "I thank Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for his phone call and
(Contd on page 5)

own towns for the first time in decades and neighbourhoods in Gaza were reduced to rubble. Hamas also escalated the conflict, pledging to kill captured Israelis if strikes targeted civilians without warning.

Israel's military said it had found the bodies of roughly 1,500 Hamas

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APT RESPONSE
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militants in Israeli territory as it gained effective control in the south and "restored full control" over the border. It was not immediately clear if those numbers overlapped with deaths previously reported by
(Contd on page 5)