

# PM to lay Rs 5,127 cr foundation stones in Arunachal

ITANAGAR, Sept 21 (IANS)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi will first visit Arunachal Pradesh on Monday to lay the foundation stones of 13 development projects worth over Rs 5,127 crore at Itanagar and will address a mega public meeting at the Indira Gandhi Park here, officials said on Sunday.

A senior official said that various arrangements, including beautification of roads, making of stages, are going in full swing.

Security has been beefed up in the capital city and the outskirts ahead of the Prime Minister's visit.

Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu, in a post on X, had said: "Walking through IG Park, Itanagar, overseeing preparations for Hon'ble PM Shri Narendra Modi Ji's visit."

"Never before has Arunachal seen such consistent attention from a Prime Minister, showing real care for the dreams and development of our people. Eager to welcome Hon'ble PM Modi Ji as he inaugurates and lays the foundation for key projects,

and witnesses the transformative impact these initiatives will bring to every corner of Arunachal," the CM had said.

The senior official said that the Prime Minister will also virtually lay the foundation stone for the 186-MW generation capacity Tato-I hydroelectric project and the 240-MW generation capacity Heo hydroelectric project over the Yarjep River in Shi Yomi district.

The total project cost of the two hydroelectric projects is Rs 3689 crore (Rs 1750 crore and Rs 1939 crore), and the total annual generation capacity will be 1803 million units.

After the commissioning of the two power plants, the state will get free power worth over Rs 98 crore and Local Area Development Fund of over Rs 16 crore every year for community development, the official said.

He said that PM Modi will also virtually inaugurate a state-of-the-art integrated convention centre at Tawang. The convention centre would be built at a cost of Rs 147 crore. Besides holding meetings, conferences, and

exhibitions, the proposed integrated convention centre will facilitate livelihood opportunities in tourism, services and handicrafts, the official pointed out. The Prime Minister 10 infrastructure projects worth Rs 1,291 crore. He will also lay 10 infrastructure projects worth Rs 1,291 crore.

The infrastructure projects also include the 1,830-km Frontier Highway project and the second phase of the Vibrant Village Programme (VVP).

According to the official, the proposed Frontier Highway project will run parallel to the McMahon Line, from Bomdila in West Kameng district to Vijaynagar in Changlang district. The ambitious highway will boost national security and greatly facilitate border connectivity, he said.



## PM Modi to inaugurate Mata Tripura Sundari temple today

AGARTALA, Sept 21 (IANS)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the redeveloped

Tripura Sundari temple, one of the 51 Shakti Peethas worshipped by Hindus, in southern Tripura's Udaipur on Monday, officials said on Sunday.

A senior police official said the Prime Minister will arrive in Agartala on Monday afternoon from Arunachal Pradesh, and then he will go to Gomati district headquarters,

Udaipur, to inaugurate the redeveloped Tripura Sundari temple, 65 km south of Agartala.

"After inaugurating the redeveloped temple and the beautified surroundings, PM Modi will offer puja at the Kali temple. After the inauguration and

offering puja, the PM will return to Agartala and then leave for Delhi. There will be no public address by the Prime Minister as per the schedule available as of now," the official said.

Taking to his official X account, Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha had said: "The enchanting nighttime supernatural view of the new infrastructure of Mother's Abode, built under the Prasad Project! The mesmerizing complex, blessed by Mother's grace, reflects the deep reverence and gratitude of the current Government towards Mother. The entire population of Tripura is eagerly awaiting the grand inauguration by the world-renowned people's leader, the illustrious Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji on the upcoming 22nd of September."

# US decision to raise H-1B visa fees likely to hurt US more than India: GTRI

NEW DELHI, Sept 21 (PTI)

A DECISION of the US President Donald Trump to raise H-1B visa fees to USD 100,000 per worker is likely to hurt America more than India, think tank GTRI said. It said that Indian IT firms already employ 50-80 per cent locals in the US, about 100,000 Americans in total. "So the measure won't create many new jobs. Instead, it will make hiring Indians on-site costlier than hiring locals," the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said.

Explaining further, it said, an IT manager with five years' experience earns USD 120,000-150,000 in the US, versus 40 per cent less on H-1B and 80 per cent less in India.

"Faced with this huge fee, firms will accelerate offshoring, doing more work remotely from India. That means fewer H-1B petitions, less local hiring, higher project costs for US clients, and slower innovation," GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava said.

He added that India must plan to ben-

efit from fee hikes by using the returning talent to build domestic capacity in software, cloud, and cybersecurity - turning a US protectionist step into a long-term boost for India's digital "Swaraj Mission".

"President Trump's September 19 decision to raise H-1B visa fees is likely to hurt the US more than India," he

said. President Donald Trump on Friday signed a proclamation raising the fee on the visas used by companies to hire workers, including from India, to live and work in the US.

The H-1B visa fee of USD 100,000 would be applicable only to new applicants, a White House official clarified on Saturday.

## Indian Embassy in US issues emergency helpline

WASHINGTON, Sept 21 (IANS)

IN A move that has set off alarm bells among Indian professionals, United States President Donald Trump has signed a proclamation imposing an annual fee of \$100,000 on H-1B visa applications. Following the announcement, the Indian Embassy in Washington released an emergency assistance number for Indian nationals in need of immediate support.

"Indian nationals seeking emer-

gency assistance may call cell number +1-202-550-9931 (and WhatsApp). This number should be used only by Indian nationals seeking immediate emergency assistance and not for routine consular queries," the Embassy stated in a post on X.

The measure has raised serious concerns regarding its implications on Indian tech professionals and the flow of remittances, with nearly 71 per cent of all H-1B visas being granted to Indian citizens.

# UK recognises Palestinian State despite opposition from US, Israel

LONDON, Sept 21 (AP)

BRITISH Prime Minister Keir Starmer confirmed Sunday that the UK is formally recognising a Palestinian state despite vociferous opposition from the US and Israel.

His announcement follows those from Canada and Australia, in what appears to be a coordinated initiative from the Commonwealth nations.

Starmer, who has faced pressure to take a harder line on Israel within his own governing Labour Party, said the move is intended "to revive the hope of peace for the Palestinians and Israelis" but that it wasn't a reward for Hamas, which he stressed will have no role in any future governance of the Palestinian people. "We must channel our efforts, united together in hope, behind the peaceful future that we want to see: the release of the hostages, an end to the violence, an end to the suffering and a shift back towards a two-state solution as the best hope for peace and security for all sides," he said.

Though the move is largely symbolic, it is a historic moment as the UK

arguably laid the groundwork for the creation of the Israeli state when it was in control of what was then known as Palestine in 1917. The announcement was widely anticipated after Starmer

said in July that the UK would recognise a Palestinian state unless Israel agreed to a ceasefire in Gaza, allowed the UN to bring in aid and took other steps toward long-term peace.

## French mayors to fly Palestinian flags despite Govt orders

PARIS, Sept 21 (AP)

SEVERAL French mayors plan to fly Palestinian flags on town halls in defiance of Government orders, as France prepares to formally recognise a Palestinian State at the United Nations General Assembly.

It's unclear how many cities will join the initiative on Monday after Socialist leader Olivier Faure's call to fly the flags, despite warnings from the Interior Ministry against such displays in a country with both Europe's largest Jewish and Muslim populations. But the call has been gaining momentum as Palestinian flags have been more and more visible in France over the nearly two-year war in Gaza. Palestinian banners were on display in demonstrations during a big day of protests across the country that criticised several policies by French President Emmanuel Macron and his Government.

The war in Gaza and the broader Israeli-Palestinian conflict are expected to be at the top of the agenda of world leaders at their annual gathering at the UN General Assembly starting Monday.

The Palestinians had said they hope at least 10 more countries will recognise the State of Palestine, adding to the more than 145 countries that already do.

# BSF adds **DRONE WARFARE** to its training syllabus

TEKANPUR, Sept 21 (PTI)

THE Border Security Force (BSF) has updated its training curriculum and added drone warfare as a mandatory subject for its troops and officers, apart from commissioning an innovation centre to develop indigenous tools for the new-age warfare post-Operation Sindoor.

The premier Officers' Training Academy of the about 2.70 lakh-strong force based in this Madhya Pradesh town near Gwalior has also created a drone technology lab for the students of Rustamji Institute of Technology (RJIT), the only higher education institute run by a paramilitary force under the Union Home Ministry.

The BSF guards India's over 6,000-km-long front with Pakistan and Bangladesh, apart from operating the Home Ministry's air wing for special missions. During Operation Sindoor, the force countered drone attacks, loitering muni-



Border Security Force (BSF) personnel undertake training in drone warfare post Operation Sindoor. (PTI)

tions and launched effective firepower against Pakistani positions along the border.

Eighteen BSF personnel, including two posthumously,

were awarded gallantry medals for displaying courage during Operation Sindoor, launched by India in May following the April 22 Pahalgam terrorist attack that

claimed 26 lives.

"We have recently revised the training curriculum for the jawans and officers, and drone technology has now been included as a mandatory subject.

"New Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are being formalised and a drone school was recently inaugurated as part of this initiative to make the force self-reliant with indigenously developed technology to combat the changing method of warfare across the globe," Director of the BSF Academy Shamsher Singh told PTI.

Singh, an Additional Director General (ADG) rank IPS officer, said the force has brought its various arms and engineering workshops, centres, RJIT and allied institutions on one platform. The BSF has also signed MoUs with various IITs and Government research organisations to prepare a road map for the tactical employment of drone technology in the border force.



# DOUBLE BONANZA

# GST bachat utsav to begin from today: Modi

NEW DELHI, Sept 21 (PTI)

ADAY before reduced GST rates come into effect, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday made a strong pitch for promoting 'swadeshi' goods and asserted that the next generation GST reforms will accelerate India's growth story, increase ease of doing business and attract more investors.

In his address to the nation, Modi said a 'GST bachat utsav (savings festival)' will begin from the first day of Navratri, and coupled with the Income Tax exemption, it will be a 'double bonanza' for most of the people. PM Modi stressed all States will be equal stakeholders in the development race



PM makes a strong pitch for promoting 'swadeshi' goods

and urged them to give pace to manufacturing with 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' and

swadeshi campaigns in mind. "On the first day of Navratri, the country is going to take an

important and big step for Atmanirbhar Bharat. With the sunrise on Monday, the next generation GST reforms will come into effect. A 'GST bachat utsav (savings festival)' will begin from Monday.

"You will be able to buy things you like more easily. The poor, middle class, neo middle class, youths, farmers, women, traders and shopkeepers will benefit from this," he said.

In this season of festivals, everyone's happiness will increase, Modi said. He congratulated all on the next generation GST reforms. "These reforms will accelerate India's growth story, increase ease of doing business and attract more investors," Modi said.

When India took a step towards GST reforms in 2017, a new beginning was made to script history, he said. He said GST realised the 'one nation-one tax' dream. Modi highlighted how the web of taxes and tolls had created hardships for businesses and consumers. Citing Income Tax exemption on earnings up to Rs 12 lakh and GST reforms, he said it is a "double bonanza" for the poor, neo-middle class, and middle class. He also said the GST move would benefit MSMEs big time.

Prime Minister Modi urged the people of the country to take pride in selling and buying indigenous goods. The way the country's independence got strengthened by the Swadeshi movement, similarly, India's prosperity will be empowered by the mantra of 'swadeshi', he said. From kitchen staples to electronics, from medicines and equipment to automobiles, goods and services will be cheaper from Monday as the reduced GST rates on about 375 items come into effect.

## 18% and 28% GST slabs Reduced rates on about 375 items come into effect

NEW DELHI, Sept 21 (PTI)

PRICES of kitchen staples to electronics, from medicines and equipment to automobiles, will get cheaper from Monday as the reduced GST rates on about 375 items come into effect.

In a bonanza to consumers, the GST Council, comprising Centre and States, has decided to reduce tax rates on goods and services, from September 22 -- the first day of the



(Contd on page 3)

# Trump administration clarifies \$1,00,000 H-1B visa fee only for new petitions

- USD 1,00,000 fee is a one-time charge
- H-1B petitions submitted before September 21 are not affected
- The proclamation applies only to new visas, not renewals, and not current visa holders



Read Editorial VISA POWER-LESS on page 4

WASHINGTON, Sept 21 (PTI)

THE Trump administration has clarified that the new USD 1,00,000 fee for H-1B visas is a one-time payment applicable only to new petitions and does not apply to current visa holders, providing a huge relief for thousands of concerned professionals working in the US, including from India.

The US Citizenship and

Immigration Services (USCIS) said in a statement on Saturday that President Trump's new H-1B visa requirement applies only to new, prospective petitions that have not yet been filed. H-1B petitions submitted before the effective proclamation date of September 21 are not affected. Those visa holders currently outside the US also do not need to pay the fee

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