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Rajnath slams Pakistan for making terrorism 'State Policy'

Earlier, Singh, Army Chief General Dhiraj Seth, Ladakh LG V K Saxena, and GOC-in-C, Northern Command, Lt Gen Pratik Sharma, paid tributes at the Kargil War Memorial here, offering homage to the fallen heroes.

Three helicopters in arrowhead formation, led by an advanced light helicopter and followed by two Cheetals, showered floral petals on the memorial from the air to mark the occasion.

The defence minister, who arrived here on Saturday, was the chief guest at the 'Shradhanjali Samaroh'.

Spiritual values must remain foundation of society: LG

The LG said spiritual values must guide individual and institutional conduct to build trust and prosperity. Mental and spiritual health must be given equal importance alongside physical strength in today's fast-paced life and youth responsibility must be nurtured through selfless action and dedication to the nation," he added.

Sinha called upon the younger generation of Jammu & Kashmir to remain connected not only with modern education but also with their cultural and spiritual values.

"True knowledge is realised through humility, and its strength becomes sacred when used in the service of others," he said.

The event, among others, was attended by Brij Lal Bhat, Director Projects (ISKCON) Swami Sriram Charana Aravinda Dasa, South Kashmir DIG Javid Iqbal Mattoo, Anantnag SSP Amod Ashok Nagpure, deputy commissioner (Anantnag) Bilal Mohiuddin Bhat, All Minority Employees Association (Kashmir) president Sanjay Koul, senior officials of police and civil administrations, members of Teerathraj Sidh Lakshmi Peeth Trust, prominent citizens and devotees in large numbers.

Schools to reopen as weather improves

open on Monday.

Earlier, the government had announced summer vacations for all schools in Kashmir Division and winter zones of Jammu Division from July 6 to July 19.

On July 18, the government extended the vacation till July 22 in view of the prevailing heatwave conditions and the adverse weather forecast.

Subsequently, following heavy rainfall, flash flood warnings and inclement weather, the government had again extended the vacations till July 26 for schools in Kashmir Division and winter zones of Jammu Division. Schools in the Jammu Division were also ordered to remain closed till July 26.

The extension came after the Meteorological Department forecast heavy rainfall and warned of flash floods between July 20 and July 23, prompting the administration to take precautionary measures.

Officials said all educational institutions had been directed to resume normal academic activities from Monday.

Ladakh LG pays tributes to Kargil War heroes

ment to the nation would continue to inspire generations.

He joined Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Chief of Army Staff Gen Dhiraj Seth and senior military officers in laying wreaths at the Kargil War Memorial in Drass on the 27th anniversary of Kargil Vijay Diwas.

On July 26, 1999, Indian Army announced the successful culmination of 'Operation Vijay', declaring victory after a nearly three-month-long battle with Pakistani troops on the icy heights of Kargil in Ladakh. The day is observed as Kargil Vijay Diwas to commemorate India's victory in the war.

"It was an absolute honour to lay a wreath and pay homage to the martyrs at the Kargil War Memorial, Drass, on the solemn occasion of the 27th Kargil Vijay Diwas. The entire nation bows to the unparalleled courage and supreme sacrifice of our valiant soldiers who protected the pride and dignity of our motherland during Operation Vijay in 1999," the LG said in a post on X.

He said the unwavering spirit displayed by the soldiers in the face of adversity continues to serve as a timeless inspiration, reminding every citizen of the sacred duty to uphold the unity, integrity and security of the nation.

"The legacy of our brave hearts will continue to inspire us forever," the LG said.

India emerging as trusted global defence partner: Modi

dia. Today, on 'Kargil Vijay Diwas', I pay my humble respects to all the brave martyrs and valiant soldiers," he said.

The Prime Minister also highlighted the 'Shaurya Vijay Yatra' organised to commemorate Kargil Vijay Diwas.

"This year, a special 'Shaurya Vijay Yatra' has been organised. This motorcycle journey, which began on July 14th from the National War Memorial in Delhi, will reach the Kargil War Memorial in Drass," PM Modi said.

"Its message is - 'One Ride, One Nation, One Salute.' This journey reminds us that the sacrifices made for the nation can never be forgotten," he added.

Kargil Vijay Diwas is observed annually on July 26 to commemorate India's victory in the Kargil War of 1999 and honour the soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice during Operation Vijay.

The prime minister also highlighted India's growing indigenous defence capabilities, citing the commissioning of INS Mahendragiri and recent defence technology tests conducted by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

"A few days ago, INS Mahendragiri was commissioned in the Indian Navy. This modern warship has been designed in India and built in India. It incorporates more than 75 per cent indigenous materials. It is a symbol of the growing strength of Aatmanirbhar Bharat," he said.

The PM also mentioned the successful testing of the Pinaka Long Range Guided Rocket and the Kusha missile.

"This month, DRDO also successfully tested the Pinaka Long Range Guided Rocket. Behind this success is the collective hard work of our scientists and engineers. Just two-three days ago, DRDO successfully tested the Kusha missile as well," he said.

"Today, be it defence production, defence exports, or political cooperation with friendly countries, India is consistently moving towards new heights," he added.

"At the beginning of this month, I was in Indonesia, where

a major agreement was reached for the BrahMos and Astra missiles. The world's trust in India's defence equipment and technology is increasing," he said.

INS Mahendragiri, the sixth Project 17A Nilgiri-class stealth frigate, was commissioned into the Indian Navy on July 11. Designed by the Indian Navy's Warship Design Bureau and built by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited, the warship has over 75 per cent indigenous content.

The frigate is equipped with advanced weapons, sensors and electronic warfare systems and is capable of undertaking anti-air, anti-surface and anti-submarine operations, besides maritime security, search and rescue and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions.

The PM also highlighted the revival of Kashmir's traditional 'Vagu' mat, describing the centuries-old craft as a unique and eco-friendly symbol of the Valley's cultural heritage.

"The tradition of making the 'Vagu' mat dates back several generations. Crafted from reeds and paddy straw, the mat keeps homes cool during summer and warm in winter," he said while addressing listeners.

"The tradition of making Kashmir's traditional 'Vagu' mat dates back many years. This mat is both unique and eco-friendly. A major feature is that it provides coolness in the summer and warmth in the winter," Modi said.

He observed that while the 'Vagu' mat was once a common feature in almost every Kashmiri household, its use had declined over the years. The Prime Minister lauded Srinagar-based artisan Ghulam Hussain and his daughter, Tanzila, for taking up the mission of reviving the traditional craft.

"While it used to be found in every Kashmiri household, its usage had declined over the last few years. Amidst that, Ghulam Hussain from Srinagar and his daughter, Tanzila, took a pledge to reviving the tradition of the 'Vagu' craft," he said.

Praising their dedication, Modi said that when talent is combined with determination, every challenge becomes easier to overcome.

He described the ongoing efforts to revive the 'Vagu' mat as an inspiring example of preserving Kashmir's traditional craftsmanship and passing it on to future generations.

Prahlad Joshi takes charge as Edu Min

Taking charge, Joshi said he was reviewing the ministry's functioning and familiarising himself with the department, describing education as "a new subject" for him.

Speaking to reporters after assuming office, Joshi said Prime Minister Narendra Modi had entrusted him with the responsibility and that he would take time to understand the ministry before making detailed comments.

"It is a very big department, so I will speak to you in detail after I have understood it completely," Joshi, who has been given additional charge of the education ministry besides his role as consumer affairs minister, said.

Pradhan resigned from his post on Saturday, following student protests, demanding his ouster over the NEET paper leak controversy.

In his resignation letter, Pradhan said it was not a matter of "individual prestige" for him, and that he was disturbed to see the series of events that unfolded over the last 10 days.

Kavinder calls for preserving cultural heritage, building drug-free society

only preserve our cultural traditions but also strengthen the bonds of unity, brotherhood and social harmony," he said.

"Fairs like the International Minjar Fair play a significant role in realising the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Vocal for Local' initiative by providing a vibrant platform to promote indigenous products and local entrepreneurship," he added.

The governor made an appeal to all the visitors to support local self-help groups, artisans, craftsmen and entrepreneurs by purchasing products from the stalls set up at the fair.

Such a collective support would not only strengthen the local economy and create employment opportunities but also help preserve and promote the rich traditional art, craft and cultural heritage of Himachal Pradesh, he said.

Expressing concern over the growing menace of drug abuse, Gupta called upon society to actively participate in creating awareness against drugs. "Public participation is the strongest weapon against drug abuse. Together, we must protect our youth and build a drug-free Himachal," he remarked, appreciating the efforts of Chamba police in this regard.

The governor also highlighted Chamba's globally acclaimed traditional crafts, including the Chamba Rumal, Chamba Chappal and Chamba Thal, and appreciated the artisans who continue to preserve the district's rich artistic legacy.

Earlier, he paid obeisance at the historic Shri Laxmi Narayan Temple, Chamba, and offered the traditional Minjar to the deity, praying for the peace, prosperity and well-being of the people of Himachal Pradesh. The sacred ritual marked the auspicious commencement of the International Minjar Fair 2026, celebrating Chamba's rich cultural and spiritual heritage.

Subsequently, he paid floral tributes to the Kargil martyrs of Chamba-Ashish Thapa, Khem Raj and Om Prakash-to mark occasion of Kargil Vijay Diwas. He also administered a pledge to the gathering to uphold the ideals and sacrifices of the nation's brave soldiers.

He also honoured Kargil veterans and the families of gallantry heroes, including retired Col Ravi Vaid, Vidya Devi, Musharbu Devi, retired Sub Maj Ashok Kumar, Hav Milap Singh, Hem Raj, Havildar Sushil Kumar, Havildar Karan Singh, Ashwani Kumar and Hav Dharampal.

The governor formally inaugurated the festival by unfurling the Minjar flag. The traditional Kunjadi Malhar was presented by Ajit Bhatt and party, who have been carrying forward this unique cultural tradition for the past 32 years.

Himachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly Speaker Kuldeep Singh Pathania, MLAs Neeraj Nayar and DS Thakur, APMC chairman Lalit Thakur, DCC president Surjeet Bharmouri, Municipal Council, Chamba, chairperson Bhuvneshwari Gulati, Zila Parishad vice-chairman Liaqat Ali, PCC general secretary Yashwant Khanna, additional deputy commissioner Amit Mehra, SP Vijay Saklani and other dignitaries were among those present on the occasion.

High-powered task force on exam reforms set up

Delhi over alleged examination irregularities and NEET paper leaks. The protests had sought the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, who resigned from the post on Saturday.

The task force is expected to suggest measures aimed at preventing paper leaks, improving digital security, enhancing monitoring mechanisms and making the examination process more transparent for students.

In a video message shared on social media, the prime minister said strict action had already been taken against those accused of compromising the future of students, asserting that the government was working to make the examination system more secure and credible.

"The Government of India is continuously taking various measures for the future of students. Those who tampered with the students' future are languishing in jail. We have already established fast-track courts. We are also moving towards enacting new legislation in Parliament that incorporates stringent legal provisions. However, we must look to the future. Our examination system needs to be reliable and transparent, and it must make maximum use of technology," he said.

He said the newly constituted task force would examine ways to reform the examination process and ensure greater integrity in upcoming tests.

Iran war spreads to Red Sea

Iran on neighbours, similar to its daily rejoinders to the U.S. attacks.

Asked about the pause, a senior official in President Donald Trump's administration said Trump "has always been clear that his preference is diplomacy, but he has shown Iran what will happen if they fail to come to the table in a serious way."

The president and his advisers have concerns about expanding the conflict, depleting defense stockpiles, alienating Middle East Gulf allies and affecting energy supplies and the global economy.

Vice President JD Vance and Gen. Dan Caine, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, both raised concerns about the U.S.

Despite the Gulf lull, Saturday's fighting between Iran's Houthi allies and Saudi Arabia showed that the war, which has already disrupted energy supplies through the Strait of Hormuz, could affect a second major shipping route and reignite Yemen's civil war.

Separately, Iran's Foreign Ministry accused Ukraine of attacking an Iranian commercial vessel in the Caspian Sea, saying one sailor was killed and another injured.

The ministry summoned Ukraine's chargé d'affaires in Tehran to protest over an attack it described as "hostile and criminal".

The Iranian denunciation coincided with comments by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy that Kyiv had noted Russia was passing on to Iran its satellite observations in the Middle East, to enable it to direct strikes in the region.

Houthi military spokesperson Yahya Saree said the group struck sites belonging to Saudi state oil company Aramco in the cities of Jizan and Yanbu.

Maldives ready to facilitate SAARC revival: Muizzu

The 19th SAARC Summit, scheduled to be hosted by Pakistan in 2016, did not take place, and Summit-level engagement within SAARC has remained stalled due to the prevailing lack of consensus among member states and concerns relating to cross-border terrorism.

The last SAARC Summit (18th Summit) was held in Nepal's capital Kathmandu on November 26, 27 in 2014.

The Maldives has consistently advocated the peaceful resolution of disputes and is prepared to take a leading role in promoting dialogue, he said and stressed that reviving SAARC and restarting meetings among its member states are essential for maintaining peace and stability in the region.

"The Maldives calls on all parties with differing views to come together around the table, prioritise regional development and peace, and work in a spirit of cooperation."

"If there are difficulties in doing so, the Maldives stands ready to take the initiative and serve as a mediator to help advance those discussions," reports said, quoting Muizzu as saying.

The SAARC was established with the signing of the SAARC Charter in Dhaka on December 8, 1985.

The Secretariat of the Association was set up in Kathmandu on January 17, 1987. SAARC region is home to nearly 1.9 billion people, representing approximately 24 per cent of the world's population, with a combined GDP of around USD 5 trillion, as per the MEA.

The South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) comprises India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Afghanistan.

Prez remembers valiant warriors

tributes to those valiant warriors who laid down their lives for the protection of our motherland," she said in a post on X in Hindi.

Their unparalleled valour, unwavering resolve, and unparalleled patriotism stand as exemplary models of our army's glorious traditions, the President said.

"The nation shall forever remain indebted to them. The saga of valour of those heroic warriors will continue to inspire future generations to tread the path of national service and steadfast duty," she added.

No comparison with any Army: Gen Seth hails Indian soldiers

roes.

"On the 27th anniversary of Kargil Vijay Diwas, I am feeling a new energy and a new pride in my presence here. On this occasion, I pay my respects to our brave martyrs and also to their families," Gen Seth said.

The Army Chief welcomed Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, who attended the commemorative event, and said his presence would serve as a source of inspiration for the Indian Army.

"On this occasion, the Defence Minister's presence among us was a very important source of inspiration for the Indian Army in the future," he said.

Recalling the courage of the soldiers who fought in the Kargil conflict, General Seth said their memories reminded him of a poem written by one of his own soldiers, which he recited during the briefing as a tribute to the spirit of the Indian Army.

Reiterating the Army's role beyond safeguarding the nation's borders, the COAS assured the country that the force would continue contributing to national progress.

"I would like to assure the country that the Indian Army is fully involved in the development of the nation and will continue to do so in the future," he said, concluding his address.

Recognition of India's spiritual legacy, says Jaishankar

ment of immense national pride, highlighting the ancient Buddhist site as an enduring symbol of India's spiritual legacy.

The decision comes during the ongoing 48th Session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee meeting in Busan, Republic of Korea.

Nestled roughly 10 km from the historic city of Varanasi, Sarnath remains one of the most revered pilgrimage destinations for global Buddhist followers. The sacred location occupies a landmark position in spiritual history as the venerable venue where Gautam Buddha delivered his maiden sermon after attaining enlightenment.

With this monumental addition, the ancient Buddhist shrine becomes India's 45th property to secure a prestigious spot on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

The strategic decision was taken during the ongoing session of the World Heritage Committee, which serves as one of the two executive organs overseeing the Convention for the Protection of the World's Cultural and Natural Heritage.

Fresh batch of 4,474 pilgrims leaves for holy cave shrine

Highway at Gangroo in Ramban's Ramsoo area, disrupting vehicular traffic. However, the road restoration agencies swiftly pressed men & machinery into service, and cleared the road within a few hours, restoring vehicular traffic.

The 57-day pilgrimage to the cave shrine was officially flagged off by LG Manoj Sinha on July 2 morning from Bhagwati Nagar base camp here simultaneously for the traditional 48-km Nunwan-Pahalgal route in Anantnag district and the shorter but steeper 14-km Baltal route in Ganderbal district. The yatra will conclude on August 28.

Authorities have put in place multi-layered security arrangements along the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway and at all transit camps to ensure the safe and smooth movement of the yatra convoys. A multi-tier security setup has been activated in and around the Bhagwati Nagar base camp.

The commencement of the yatra had marked the beginning of the country's one of the most revered spiritual pilgrimages and reflects the coordinated efforts of the administration and all stakeholder departments to facilitate a secure, seamless and memorable pilgrimage experience for every devotee.

Traffic restrictions will remain in force on various stretches of the highway till August 28, with daily advisories and sector-wise cut-off timings to regulate traffic, officials said.

PoJK retrieval only pending issue between India, Pak: Jitendra

vigilance and national unity," he said.

Tracing the historical context of the Kargil conflict, the minister said the events of 1999 cannot be viewed in isolation but as part of a prolonged sequence of developments beginning with the partition.

Calling partition "the greatest blunder of history", he said the decision inflicted immense human suffering, displaced millions and laid the foundation for decades of hostility, including the wars of 1947, 1965, 1971 and Kargil, as well as sustained cross-border terrorism and proxy warfare.

He also recalled the displacement of Kashmiri Pandits as one of the gravest humanitarian tragedies witnessed in independent India.

"India has fundamentally transformed its national security approach over the last decade. The government has adopted a policy of zero tolerance towards terrorism, strengthened border management and replaced a reactive security doctrine with a proactive strategy capable of responding decisively to external aggression. This shift has significantly enhanced national confidence and strengthened India's ability to safeguard its territorial integrity," he said.

He referred to major infrastructure projects, including railway connectivity to Kashmir, the world's highest railway bridge, new AIIMS institutions, long-pending irrigation projects and accelerated development initiatives that had improved the quality of life and strengthened public confidence.

"The sustained peace has enabled rapid development, while development itself has emerged as a powerful force for lasting stability," he said.

MP Bansuri Swaraj attended the programme as Guest of Honour, while Col K K Sharma (SC, SM & Bar), a Kargil War veteran, presided over the function. The event was organised under the leadership of Mahinder Mehta, convener of J&K Peoples' Forum, along with PoJK Youth Forum, to pay homage to the brave soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice during the 1999 Kargil conflict.

Cong questions PM's 'stony silence' on student protests

Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food, and Public Distribution.

But in any case, this is a "one-man, two-face government", Ramesh said on X.

"The true 'niyat' of the Modi government is evident in the outpouring of political support the BJP has extended to the discredited ex-Mantri Pradhan, and the Pradhan Mantri's own stony silence on the student protests and the police brutality on students in his 'Mann ki Baat' monologue today," the Congress leader said.

The government's goal is only "political hegemony", he alleged.

Modi on Sunday asserted that India is scaling new heights in defence production, military exports and also in the field of political cooperation with friendly nations.

Addressing his monthly radio broadcast 'Mann Ki Baat', he also paid tributes to the 1999 Kargil War martyrs.

The prime minister, however, made no mention of the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP)-led protests on the NEET paper leak.