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## Modi's Israel visit to boost bilateral def, trade cooperation

ship between the two sides with Israel supplying a plethora of military platforms and weapon systems to India.

Last November, during the visit of India's defence secretary to Israel, an important agreement on defence cooperation was signed.

As India is looking at developing an indigenous air defence shield called "Sudarshan Chakra", it is learnt that New Delhi would like to explore the possibility of incorporating certain elements from Israel's Iron Dome all-weather air defence system that can intercept and destroy missiles and artillery shells.

The trade and investment ties between the two sides are also witnessing steady progress.

During the visit to Israel of Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal in November, the term of reference (ToR) for the launch of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations between India and Israel was signed.

In September, the two sides had inked a Bilateral Investment Agreement (BIA) to expand economic cooperation.

The people-to-people ties between the two countries are also an important aspect of the overall relations with over 41,000-strong Indian diaspora playing a key role in the two-way engagement.

In November 2023, India and Israel signed a bilateral framework agreement to facilitate the temporary and legal employment of Indian workers in Israel.

Since then, 20,000 Indians arrived in Israel, both under the Government-to-Government route and through private channels, according to officials.

## Canada moves to revoke 26/11 mastermind's citizenship

the Global report added.

A hearing related to the revocation was held in Federal Court last week.

Government lawyers asked the court on December 19 for permission to withhold sensitive national security information from the case.

An immigration department spokesperson told Global News that cancelling citizenship for misrepresentation was "an important tool for maintaining the integrity of Canadian citizenship."

To ensure the process is fair, the Federal Court makes the final decision in such cases, Mary Rose Sabater said.

"The Government does not take the revocation of citizenship lightly."

She said she could not say how many such revocations had occurred because the department did not track them, but a review by Global News identified only three such decisions in the past decade.

## LG thanks PM for civil enclave expansion at Sgr airport

Srinagar on September 25, 2021 in the presence of then minister for MoCA, Gol," he said in a post on X.

CCEA's Rs 1,677 cr approval for a new 71,500 sqm civil enclave marks a defining leap in connectivity for the valley.

It is designed to serve 2,900 passengers during peak hours and an annual capacity of 10 million passengers per annum.

Better connectivity will ensure more tourists, more investment and more jobs. The new civil enclave in Srinagar will upgrade the valley's economic future and transforming Srinagar from a beautiful destination into a thriving one.

"Under the leadership of PM Modi, Jammu airport's new terminal is set for completion by end of this year. Upon commissioning, the advanced infrastructure in the renowned spiritual city will bolster connectivity and catalyse remarkable economic advancement," the LG said.

## Over 1,000 posts of doctors lying vacant

age of doctors in peripheral and remote areas, the government has recently referred 480 posts of medical officers to the Public Service Commission for selection of suitable candidates," the department said.

It said the department is monitoring issues related to the referral of direct recruitment vacancies as well as the filling up of promotion-quota posts on a priority basis, and necessary steps for filling up these vacancies have been taken from time to time.

After completion of the selection process of medical officers, the newly selected doctors shall be posted to far-flung and under-served areas and health institutions facing shortage of staff, as per requirement and policy in vogue, the department said.

It said the government is cognizant of the need to strengthen specialist services at peripheral hospitals.

Several remedial measures have already been initiated, including rationalisation and redeployment of available specialist manpower, engagement of specialists on contractual basis, utilisation of National Health Mission (NHM) and other centrally sponsored schemes for hiring of specialists, tele-medicine and e-Sanjeevani services for expert consultations, the department said.

These steps are expected to substantially reduce avoidable referrals and improve access to specialist healthcare at the peripheral level.

With the establishment of seven new Government Medical Colleges across Jammu and Kashmir, the department said the referral load to GMC Jammu and GMC Srinagar has reduced considerably as major specialist services are now being provided in these newly established institutions.

In addition, consultants and medical officers posted at Sub-District Hospitals (SDHs) and Primary Health Centres (PHCs) are actively delivering services at the peripheral level, thereby minimising routine referrals.

These measures have significantly strengthened the availability of specialist care within the districts and contributed to reducing unnecessary patient transfers to the tertiary hospitals at Jammu and Srinagar, the department said.

Referrals are made to GMC Jammu/Srinagar only in extreme emergencies.

On the paramedical front, the department said 292 vacancies in the non-gazetted/paramedical category from the Directorate of Family Welfare, Maternity and Child Health (MCH), and Immunisation have been referred to the Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB) for recruitment, which stands advertised for making selection of suitable candidates.

Also 290 vacancies in the non-gazetted/paramedical category from the Directorate of Health Services, Jammu have also been referred to the J&KSSB for recruitment.

Besides 608 posts of Directorate of Health Services, Jammu are also in the process of referral to JKSSB for recruitment, after having concurrence of Finance Department, the department said.

Furthermore, it said 802 non-gazetted, multi-tasking staff vacancies and sanitation worker posts pertaining to Directorate of Health Services, Kashmir are under examination in the department for further referral to JKSSB. These posts shall be referred after having concurrence of Finance Department.

## BOSE/SSSA designated as nodal agency for TET

ber 30, 2025. The Supreme Court, in its judgment, ruled that provisions of the Right to Education (RTE) Act are applicable to all schools, except minority institutions, and held

that in-service teachers must qualify TET to continue in service, with limited exemptions.

According to the order, in-service teachers with less than five years of service left before superannuation have been exempted from qualifying TET for continuation in service. However, such teachers will not be eligible for promotion unless they qualify TET. Teachers recruited prior to the enactment of RTE Act and having more than five years of service remaining have been directed to qualify TET within two years, failing which they shall be liable to compulsory retirement with admissible terminal benefits, subject to rules.

The Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Department, in its legal opinion, clarified that the Supreme Court judgment operates as a judgment in rem and is binding on all States and Union Territories under Article 141 of the Constitution of India. It further stated that TET qualification is mandatory for teachers in both government and private schools, including registered institutions, while minority institutions stand temporarily exempted pending decision by a larger Bench.

The action plan approved by the government provides that JKBOSE shall function as the examination conducting agency. Online forms will be received through a NIC-developed software module integrated with the JKBOSE website. Examination centres will be established at district headquarters and in the twin capitals of Srinagar and Jammu.

The invigilation staff will comprise +2 lecturers from the School Education Department and Assistant Professors from the Higher Education Department, while security arrangements will include deployment of Gazetted officers as observers, installation of jammers, police assistance, and imposition of restrictions under Section 163 of BNSS, wherever required.

The syllabus for TET will be aligned with the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) guidelines and based on the CTET framework, with suitable modifications in accordance with J&K's curriculum and scheme of studies.

The Secretary, JKBOSE/SSSA, has been directed to take immediate steps for operationalization of the TET framework, notify a detailed examination schedule, coordinate with concerned departments for logistical and security arrangements, and submit a comprehensive action plan with timelines to the School Education Department at the earliest.

The entire examination process is to be completed within the next two years, as mandated by the Supreme Court judgment.

## Jammu courts lead in pendency among J&amp;K distts

and subordinate courts of Jammu and Kashmir, alongside efforts to fill judicial vacancies, as highlighted in a recent legislative response, officials said.

Among 20 districts, Jammu accounts for the highest pendency at 77,992 cases, with over a thousand cases pending for a period between 15 to 30 years - more than Srinagar, which stands at 62,785.

According to official data, there is a pendency of 3,89,210 cases in the 232 district and other lower courts in Jammu and Kashmir from the past 30 years till January 2026.

Of this, 2,40,718 (62 per cent) cases are criminal litigation while 1,48,492 are civil, with criminal proceedings exceeding civil disputes by over 92,000 cases, the data shows.

Year-wise distribution indicates that the backlog is heavily skewed towards recent filings, suggesting a sustained inflow of fresh litigation. "As many as 2,38,373 cases - over 60 per cent of the total - are less than one year old. In the medium-term brackets, 36,849 cases are pending for three to five years, 25,746 for five to seven years and 20,732 for seven to ten years," it said.

However, legacy cases continue to weigh on the system, with 9,778 matters pending for 10-15 years and 1,857 for 15-20 years. The data further reveals that 424 cases have been pending for 20-30 years, while 13 cases have crossed the 30-year mark, underscoring the persistence of decades-old litigation.

District-wise, Jammu accounts for the highest pendency at 77,992 cases - much above Srinagar, which stands at 62,785 cases, the data shows. "Together, the two districts contribute almost one-third of the Union territory's total backlog." Jammu district has the highest number of aged cases above 30 years, 11 out of a total of 13 cases, followed by 238 cases pending for a period between 20 to 30 years, 830 (15-20 years), 3,516 (10-15 years) and 13,736 cases pending between five to ten years, it said.

It is followed by Srinagar with two cases pending above 30 years, followed by 96 (20-30 years), 336 (15-20 years), 1,281 (10-15 years) and 6,988 cases pending between five to ten years.

Among other districts reporting substantial pendency are Anantnag with 31,969 cases, Baramulla with 28,495, Budgam with 21,070 and Kupwara with 18,874.

In contrast, districts such as Kishtwar (3,852), Reasi (6,857), Bhandarwah (7,840) and Ramban (8,060) report comparatively lighter caseloads, the data revealed.

Overall, the figures highlight a dual challenge for the judicial system in Jammu and Kashmir - managing a continuous surge of fresh filings while attempting to clear a limited but enduring cluster of long-pending disputes, officials said.

They emphasised that pendency remains a nationwide challenge, and concerted steps are underway in the Union territory to overhaul legal handling and significantly reduce arrears, particularly in government litigation.

Officials highlighted key initiatives to minimise pendency, including continuous and regular upgrading of judicial infrastructure, computerisation of courts to streamline processes, creation of courts at various levels and regular holding of Lok Adalats for amicable settlements through mediation and reconciliation.

"In 2024-25 alone, Lok Adalats settled as many as 8,68,414 cases, contributing substantially to pendency reduction. Steps to operationalise Dehi Adalats as village-level dispute resolution forums are being taken, apart from digitisation of court processes, which has accelerated disposal rates," they said.

For subordinate courts, out of the sanctioned strength of 339 judges, 284 are working while 55 posts are vacant, they added.

"Vacancies in subordinate courts are being filled on a regular basis. Currently, the process for filling 42 posts of civil judge (Junior Division) is at the final stage, with selections being conducted by the Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission," officials said.

These efforts reflect a multi-pronged strategy combining infrastructure enhancement, technology adoption, alternative dispute resolution and timely recruitment to ensure faster justice delivery in the region, they added.

## India abstains from UNGA draft resolution on 4th anniversary of war

It has been exactly four years since Russia launched its large-scale invasion of Ukraine, attacking the country from multiple directions. On February 24, 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced a "special operation," a campaign that many expected to be brief and to end with Kyiv's capitulation.

Instead, European officials travelled to the Ukrainian

capital on Tuesday to show their support for President Volodymyr Zelensky and the Ukrainian people, who are fighting on.

While Putin did not get the quick and overwhelming victory he had hoped for, the cost has been high on both sides. And, as Europe's biggest conflict enters its fifth year, there is no sign of any peace deal despite US diplomatic efforts over the past year.

President Vladimir Putin held a meeting with top officials of Russia's top counterintelligence agency on Tuesday without mentioning the anniversary.

Putin told the officials of the Federal Security Service, or FSB, that the threat of attacks against Russia had increased, including those carried out by Ukraine's special forces.

He said greater protection would be needed for energy and transport infrastructure, as well as for leading defence industry officials.

## VP to visit Kashmir on Feb 26

the 21st convocation of the University of Kashmir here. "Authorities have put in place a comprehensive, multi-layered security grid, particularly around the university campus in Hazratbal area of Srinagar city and other vital installations," officials said.

"Security forces have been deployed in strength at vulnerable locations, with heightened alertness maintained to counter potential terrorist threats. Checking and surveillance have been stepped up across the valley," the officials added.

"Additional checkpoints have been set up at important entry points, especially around the city, and increased patrolling, area domination operations, and surprise inspections are being conducted along vital roadways to prevent any untoward incident," officials said.

Radhakrishnan will be the chief guest at the convocation and deliver the convocation address in his first visit to Kashmir since assuming office.

LG and university chancellor Manoj Sinha will preside over the convocation, while chief minister and pro-chancellor Omar Abdullah will attend the convocation as Guest of Honour.

A total of 59,558 degrees, which include 44,910 Undergraduates, 13,545 Postgraduates, 461 MD/MS, four MCh, 18 MPhil and 620 PhDs, shall be conferred during the convocation, according to officials.

## Terrorists strike in Pak's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; 6 cops killed

target of terrorists for the past some time and several have lost their lives in terror attacks.

A major operation had been launched to track down the terrorists.

## Ladakh's Pashmina set to become global luxury benchmark: Kavinder

ment officials under one roof to chart out a sustainable and inclusive path for Pashmina sector.

Gupta emphasised that Pashmina was not merely a luxury fabric, but the very identity, heritage, and pride of Ladakh. "The delicate fibre tells a story of dedication, perseverance, and craftsmanship. In the icy, harsh winds of Changthang, our shepherds nurture Changra goats with unparalleled care, and our skilled artisans transform this raw fibre into textiles of the highest global standards. This is more than production; it is a living example of harmony between nature, culture, and human skill," he said.

Addressing a crucial aspect of Ladakh's Pashmina economy, Gupta said while the region produces the finest raw Pashmina in the world, much of its value is often realized outside Ladakh.

He stressed the need to move from being merely a source of raw material to becoming a centre of value creation. "Our goal is clear: Pashmina should be processed, branded, and marketed from Ladakh, recognized globally for authenticity, quality, and ethical production," he said.

Gupta outlined a comprehensive vision to achieve this transformation. He emphasized that all policies would prioritize the welfare, knowledge, and rights of Changpa shepherds and artisans, keeping their expertise and contribution central to every initiative.

"Modern institutional frameworks are planned for quality testing, fibre grading, certification, design innovation, and branding to ensure that Ladakhi Pashmina gains certified, credible, and globally recognised standards," he said and stressed that this growth must be sustainable and environmentally responsible, acknowledging the fragile ecology of Changthang and the challenges posed by climate change and pasture management.

"Every step will integrate scientific planning with community participation to safeguard both heritage and nature," he said.

The LG underlined that the Conclave should serve as more than a platform for dialogue. "This is a foundation from which ideas become policies, recommendations turn into institutional frameworks, and resolutions evolve into commitments that strengthen Ladakh's heritage and economic future," he said.

He also addressed the youth of Ladakh, calling Pashmina a golden opportunity for their generation. He urged them to embrace modern skills in technology, design, marketing, and entrepreneurship to take Ladakh's Pashmina to every global market and establish a strong, internationally recognized Ladakhi brand.

He assured the government's full support in training, financial assistance, technical collaboration, and market linkages to empower the youth to realize the full potential of this invaluable fibre.

Gupta called upon all stakeholders to join in a collective pledge: to make Ladakh's Pashmina a global benchmark of luxury. Ladakh's labour a symbol of international respect, and Ladakh's heritage a source of strength for generations to come.

He reiterated that Ladakh must evolve from being just a supplier of raw material to becoming a global centre of excellence for Pashmina, recognized for ethical production, traceability, sustainability, and unmatched craftsmanship.

Chief Secretary Ashish Kundra highlighted efforts to unite all stakeholders from herders to designers and government agencies to protect Ladakh's Pashmina value chain. Producing 40-50 tonnes annually, much of the profit currently goes to traders outside the region. He stressed the need for a holistic approach, enabling Ladakh to produce luxury cashmere shawls, attract the next generation, and position Pashmina as a high-end global product, benefiting all stakeholders.

Secretary, Cooperatives, Bhupesh Chaudhary emphasised the role of the Cooperatives Department in the overall growth of the Pashmina sector in Ladakh, highlighting factors affecting its growth such as climate change, the need for collective approaches including cooperative farming, and the potential benefits of adopting successful cooperative models such as AMUL.

Secretary, Youth Services & Sports, Moses Kunzang highlighted the Pashmina Matrix adopted by the Department of Industries and Commerce for the growth of the sector in Ladakh, with emphasis on collaborative functioning across departments as well as focused interventions wherever required.

Secretary, Industries & Commerce, Shashanka Ala briefed participants about the sessions planned during the day, namely Fibre Source and Sustainability; Processing and Purity-Quality; Grading and Standardisation Gaps; Yarn to

Loom-Artisan Livelihoods and Design Relevance; and Brand, Market and Value Capture-Positioning Pashmina Ladakh as a Global Luxury Brand.

Among those present were representatives from Central Government bodies including the Central Wool Development Board (Ministry of Textiles, Government of India) and the Textile Committee (Statutory Body under Ministry of Textiles, Government of India); officials from Department of Industries & Commerce, Department of Sheep Husbandry/Animal Husbandry, Department of Handloom & Handicrafts, Rural Development Department, and Social & Tribal Welfare Department; Pashmina herder representatives from Changthang, Pashmina processing and de-hairing units, women-led MSMEs, cooperatives and self-help groups, local designers and entrepreneurs along with distinguished fashion designers and industry leaders such as Samir Mehra (Founder, EZMA), Suket Dhir (SUKETDHIR), Rajesh Pratap Singh (Rajesh Pratap Singh Label), Kulbhushan Ahuja (Founder, Ahujasons), and Karan Ahuja (Director, Ahujasons).

## Prez stresses affordable world-class healthcare for all

states to provide access to quality healthcare. These efforts are yielding positive results.

The President said that in building a healthy India, the role of all stakeholders, along with the government, was crucial. "Everyone must work together to ensure quality healthcare reaches every citizen. The 'Saving Lives and Building a Healthier Bharat' campaign is one such effort," she added.

She was speaking after inaugurating 'Saving Lives and Building a Healthier Bharat' campaign, organised by P D Hinduja Hospital, at an event in Mumbai's Lok Bhavan.

"I am confident that India will gain prestige as a global healthcare destination," Murmu said.

She asked private hospitals and medical institutes to keep in mind social responsibility along with healthcare.

Murmu arrived in Mumbai Tuesday afternoon for a two-day visit to Maharashtra.

She was received at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport by Governor Acharya Devvrat, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, Deputy Chief Ministers Ek-nath Shinde and Sunetra Ajit Pawar and Mayor Ritu Tawde.

## Vande Bharat to run between Jammu, Sgr from Mar 1

also revised the composition of the train, increasing the coach strength from the existing 8-coach Vande Bharat rake to a 20-coach rake in view of expected passenger demand.

The extension is aimed at enhancing rail connectivity in Jammu and Kashmir and providing improved travel experience to passengers commuting between the Valley and the Jammu region.

## Trump's tariffs return, but at softer bite

lower-than-flagged rate suggests an attempt to balance political objectives with concerns about inflation, market volatility and potential retaliation from trading partners.

For global trading partners, the introduction of a uniform 10 percent levy revives familiar anxieties about protectionism and the durability of existing trade arrangements. Several governments are closely watching whether the measure remains temporary or becomes a stepping stone toward broader and more aggressive trade barriers. As the tariffs take hold, attention is now focused on whether the White House will escalate further or use the current rate as leverage in negotiations, keeping global markets on edge over the next phase of US trade policy.

## Kerala renamed as Keralam

Cabinet, the president of India will refer a Bill, namely the Kerala (Alteration of Name) Bill, 2026 to the State Legislative Assembly of Kerala for expressing its views under proviso to Article 3 of the Constitution of India.

After receipt of the views of the Kerala Legislative Assembly, the government of India will obtain the recommendation of the president for introduction of the Kerala (Alteration of Name) Bill, 2026 to alter the name of Kerala as 'Keralam' in Parliament, an official release said.

The Legislative Assembly of Kerala passed a resolution on June 24, 2024 to alter the name of Kerala to 'Keralam'.

"The name of our State is 'Keralam' in Malayalam Language. States were formed on the basis of language on the 1st day of November, 1956. The Kerala Piravi Day is also on the 1st day of November.

The matter regarding alteration of the name Kerala as Keralam was considered in the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India and with the approval of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, the draft note for the Cabinet for the alteration of name of Kerala as Keralam was circulated to the Department of Legal Affairs and Legislative Department, Ministry of Law and Justice for their comments.

The Department of Legal Affairs and Legislative Department, Ministry of Law and Justice have concurred with the proposal for the alteration of name of Kerala as 'Keralam'.

## Parl panel passes resolution condemning 'shirtless protest' by Cong

condemned the manner in which the Congress held the protest include Samajwadi Party chief and former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav; BSP supreme and former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Mayawati; YSRCP chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy; RJD leader Manoj Jha; and Trinamool Congress leaders, among others."

Meanwhile, Delhi police have arrested Indian Youth Congress president Uday Bhanu Chib as the "main conspirator" and "mastermind" of the shirtless protest staged by a group of youth wing members at the AI Impact Summit here last week.

The arrest memo of Chib terms him the main conspirator and mastermind of the unlawful assembly at the Bharat Mandapam, where the protesters raised "anti-national slogans" and tried to incite a "riot-like situation".

A Delhi court has sent him to four-day police custody.

## Committee Formed To Fix Transport Fee For Private Schools In J&amp;K

JAMMU, FEB 24: In compliance with the directions of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, the government has constituted a committee to determine the transport fee structure for private schools across the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir.

According to an order issued by the Fee Fixation and Regulation Committee (FFRC), the panel has been formed in pursuance of directions passed in writ petition (C No. 10702). The High Court had directed constitution of a committee comprising the Commissioner/Secretary to the Government, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution Department; Commissioner/Secretary to the Government, Transport Department; Ashish Gupta, Special Secretary, Law, J&K UT; and Firdous Parry, Deputy Legal Remembrancer, FFRC.

The committee has been authorised to co-opt experts and seek assistance of officials having requisite knowledge for determination of transport fares. It will adopt appropriate procedures for conducting meetings and proceedings, and submit its report within one month from the date of issuance of the order.