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India's aspirations 'no longer limited to borders': Modi tells diaspora

Modi said India has nearly 125 active unicorns now. "Today, our startups are doing remarkable work in AI, defence, and the space sector. This culture of research and innovation is becoming even more expansive," he added.

He said that India's aspiration-driven journey is also strengthening its democracy, as he mentioned the recently held assembly elections in multiple states.

"This time, West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Puducherry witnessed nearly 80-90 per cent voter turnout. Women's participation also increased significantly, and this trend is visible across every state. Today, voters in India are enthusiastic. We feel proud that voting records are being broken every year," he said.

Modi also took a jibe at the opposition parties, asking the audience if the popular snack Jhalmuri has reached The Hague as well.

Underlining that the Netherlands is known for tulips, Modi added that India is known for the lotus. "Both the tulip and the lotus teach us that whether the roots are in water or in the earth, one gains both beauty and strength," he said.

Modi said India and the Netherlands can coordinate in the international arena and work on securing global projects.

Modi also said that many cultures have vanished over time. But India's diverse culture still beats in the hearts of its people. "Generations have changed, countries have changed, environments have changed... but the family values have not changed," the PM said.

Referring to the COVID pandemic and global conflicts, Modi said that this decade is becoming a decade of challenges for the world. "If these situations are not changed rapidly, the achievements of the past many decades will be washed away," he warned.

Modi arrived in the Netherlands on Friday on the second leg of his five-nation tour to further deepen bilateral cooperation in areas such as trade, technology, defence and renewable energy.

After Trump trip, Putin to visit China next week

Still, Xi's "no limits" alliance with Putin - announced just before the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 - has undercut that stance.

China has also denied reports that Chinese firms have

single-handedly sustained Russian drone production, in part by shipping engines mislabelled as "industrial refrigeration units" to drone assembly plants.

"We discussed - well, it's one that we'd like to see settled," Trump said in his remarks.

As Washington and Beijing's relationship has been beset by tension, Chinese-Russian relations have only appeared to deepen in recent months.

Although the duo are not formal military allies, they maintain extremely close political and economic ties, with China stepping in to buy Russian oil and goods after Western nations cut ties with Moscow.

Before a four-day trip to China last August, Putin had decried "discriminatory" Western sanctions and heaped praises on Beijing.

China is now by far Russia's biggest trading partner by volume, and transactions are almost entirely carried out in Russian roubles and Chinese yuan, Putin said at the time.

Last month, Xi pressed for "closer and stronger strategic coordination" between Beijing and Moscow in a meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

Xi also visited Russia in May last year and pledged to stand with Moscow against "unilateralism and hegemonic bullying".

15-day summer vacations for distt courts

cation issued by the Registrar General's office, the courts will observe a 15-day vacation from June 8 to June 22, 2026, including both dates.

The order applies to district courts situated in the summer zone of Jammu province. However, courts operating in the districts of Kishtwar and Doda, along with courts located at Batote, Gool, Banihal and Ukhral in Ramban district, and Bani in Kathua district, have been exempted from the vacation schedule.

The high court has also instructed Principal District and Sessions Judges as well as Chief Judicial Magistrates of the concerned districts to ensure proper arrangements for hearing and disposal of urgent criminal matters during the vacation period within their jurisdictions.

2 police officers transferred, posted

has been directed to await further orders of posting at police headquarters.

Musadiq Majid Basu, SP Security VIP Tech, is transferred and posted as SP SS CID headquarters against an

available vacancy.

Pak must decide if it wants to be part of geography, warns COAS

have to decide whether they want to be part of geography or history or not."

His remarks at the event, 'Sena Samwad', came days after the country and the Indian military marked the first anniversary of Operation Sindoor. Gen Dwivedi's remarks, though brief carried a blunt message to Pakistan, and reiterated India's stand against terrorism.

Operation Sindoor was launched early on May 7 last year in retaliation to the deadly Pahalgam terror attack, with Indian forces conducting precision strikes on multiple terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Jammu-Kashmir (PoJK).

Pakistan later also launched offensives against India, and all subsequent counter-offensives by India were also carried out under Operation Sindoor.

The military conflict between the two nuclear-armed neighbours, lasting nearly 88 hours, halted after they reached an understanding on the evening of May 10.

India rejects IWT arbitration award, calls tribunal 'illegal'

nouncements of the illegally constituted CoA," he added. Reiterating India's long-standing stand on the matter, the MEA spokesperson said, "India has never recognised the establishment of this so-called CoA. Any proceeding, award, or decision issued by it is null and void. India's decision to hold the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance remains in force."

The Indus Waters Treaty, signed between India and Pakistan in 1960, governs the sharing of waters of six rivers of the Indus basin, Indus, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas and Sutlej.

The Permanent Court of Arbitration, headquartered at the Peace Palace in The Hague, had constituted the Court of Arbitration to examine disputes linked to the treaty. However, New Delhi has consistently refused to participate in the proceedings, arguing that the arbitration mechanism violates the dispute resolution framework of the treaty. New Delhi has repeatedly maintained that any pronouncement made by the tribunal lacks legal validity and is not binding on India.

CJI calls for AI-based judicial architecture for faster justice delivery

veloped digital platforms.

"Indian judiciary is committed to ensuring optimum utilisation of not only technological advancements that have been going on and which are integral part of our system since 1990, but also of latest designs of AI and how we can use them for the benefit of the common man," he said.

"We should think of deepening technology and AI-based judicial architecture. Technology is the only effective answer to wastage of judiciary's time," the CJI added.

He stressed the need to embrace technological advancement in judiciary for expediting the justice delivery system.

Praising Madhya Pradesh HC for developing these platforms, the CJI said that as stated by the Union Minister of State for Law and Justice Arjun Ram Meghwal, there was a need to roll out these technological advancements at the pan-India level.

A committee has been constituted by the Supreme Court on how to use AI for the benefit of the judicial system, especially in speedy disposal of cases, according to him.

Minister Meghwal, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav and MP High Court Chief Justice Sanjeev Sabharwal also spoke on the occasion.

Meanwhile, Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Saturday issued a strongly worded clarification on his 'para-

sites' remarks, saying he was "pained" by media reports that suggested he criticised youth.

"I am pained to read how a section of the media has misquoted my oral observations made during the hearing of a frivolous case yesterday," the CJI said in a statement.

Kant emphasised that his remarks were specifically directed at individuals entering the legal profession through "fake and bogus degrees" and were "misquoted by a section of the media."

Kavinder calls for national movement on river conservation

tional Festival of Rivers (IFOR) Conclave, organised jointly by IFOR and Sanatani Ganga Foundation, he underscored the deep civilisational bond between India and its rivers, warning that failure to act decisively against mounting environmental threats could leave future generations facing a catastrophic water crisis.

Gupta said rivers, such as the Ganga, Yamuna, Saraswati, Narmada, Brahmaputra, Godavari and Kaveri, were not merely water bodies but the very soul of the nation's civilisation, spirituality and cultural identity. "Our civilisations were built on the banks of rivers, and even today, the lives of hundreds of millions remain dependent on them," he added.

Highlighting Himachal Pradesh's unique geographical significance, he pointed out that the state, widely revered as Devbhoomi, serves as the origin of several sacred rivers. The Sutlej, Beas, Ravi, Chenab and Yamuna, he noted, were not only the lifeline of northern India but also the foundation of the country's agriculture, energy, biodiversity and economy.

The governor painted a stark picture of the challenges confronting India's river systems, citing pollution, encroachment, unscientific development practices, climate change, plastic waste and the steady depletion of water sources as matters of grave national concern.

He cautioned that without timely and decisive intervention, the consequences for future generations could be severe and irreversible.

Commending Prime Minister Narendra Modi's flagship 'Namami Gange' initiative, he described it as far more than a government scheme, calling it a transformative national movement rooted in public participation.

He urged citizens across the country to embrace river conservation as a personal and civic duty rather than delegating it entirely to the state.

The governor urged students, universities and civil society organisations to actively participate in campaigns promoting water conservation, cleanliness and environmental protection.

He called for 'River Literacy' - awareness about rivers and their conservation - to be elevated into a nationwide grassroots movement, with technology and innovation harnessed to develop new and effective methods of water conservation.

The governor called for robust global cooperation, observing that rivers recognise no borders and serve as connectors across nations, cultures and societies. Invoking the ancient Indian philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam - the world is one family - he affirmed that India remains committed to leading the path of global well-being in addressing shared environmental challenges.

He called upon all stakeholders as well as youth to collectively resolve to keep rivers clean and free-flowing, make water conservation a people's movement, strike a balance between nature and development, and bequeath a safe and thriving environment to the generations that follow.

Those who shared the dais included Acharya Pramod Krishnam, Shri 1008 Paramhans Krishnanand Kalidas Maharaj, Ravi Prapannacharya Maharaj; Swami Radha Rang Maharaj (president of Prabhu Prem Mission, Gorakhpur) Mata Rudrani Maharaj and Amrita Annapurna Maa of Kheer Bhawani Temple.

SKUAST-K under SREP drives social change through school mobilisation

SRINAGAR, MAY 16: Continuing its grassroots outreach under the newly launched Student Rural Exploration Program (SREP), faculty, staff, and students of Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology Kashmir today visited dozens of adopted villages across the valley, shifting the focus toward driving holistic social change and institutional mobilisation.

Building upon the framework of the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP-20), the university's multidisciplinary cohorts moved beyond traditional agricultural fields to engage deeply with rural educational institutions, marking a significant step in bridging the gap between scientific academia and rural society.

As part of the day's intensive outreach, SKUAST-K

teams visited several government schools to conduct institutional sensitization and social mobilisation campaigns. Recognising that young minds are the most effective vectors for societal transformation, the university experts, scientists, and scholars educated school children, teachers, and local youth about various government welfare schemes, health and hygiene practices, and sustainable livelihood initiatives beneficial to rural society.

These interactive sessions were designed to empower the village communities with vital knowledge on nutrition, climate resilience, and modern rural entrepreneurship opportunities from an early age.

In a practical demonstration of its commitment to the rural ecosystem, SKUAST-K also took direct action to improve the infra-

structure and aesthetic environment of the visited government schools. Understanding that school gardens serve as vital interactive learning spaces for children, the university teams actively helped multiple institutions restore, design, and maintain their campus lawns and gardens.

To ensure the sustainability of these green spaces, the visiting teams were aided with essential gardening tools and maintenance equipment, working hand-in-hand with children to maintain the school gardens.

Commending the teams for their expanded role in rural development, Vice Chancellor, SKUAST-K, Prof Nazir Ahmad Ganai while visiting some of the schools in adopted villages, said that the true measure of agricultural education lies in its ability to uplift the entire

rural ecosystem. He emphasised that by entering government schools and upgrading their learning environments, the university is not just gathering data, but actively seeding the minds of the next generation with scientific awareness and environmental stewardship, thereby transforming students into true agents of societal change.

The SREP, which deploys structured teams of undergraduate, postgraduate, and PhD scholars across 300 villages, has now firmly established itself as a fortnightly fixture on the SKUAST-K academic calendar.

By documenting local institutional needs alongside agricultural challenges, the university continues to foster a generation of socially empathetic professionals while driving immediate, tangible development at the grassroots level.

Avian conservation key to ecological balance, climate resilience: Javid Dar



HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS JAMMU, MAY 16

Emphasizing the critical role of birds in maintaining ecological balance and addressing the emerging climate challenges, Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Department, Javid Ahmad Dar, today said that avian conservation is indispensable for sustaining biodiversity, ensuring ecosystem stability and strengthening the climate resilience in fragile regions like Jammu and Kashmir.

The Minister was addressing the valedictory function of the National Symposium on Avian Biology organized at Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST)-Kashmir, where he attended as the chief guest.

Addressing a distinguished gathering of scientists, conservationists, researchers and students from across the country, the Minister highlighted Jammu and Kashmir's extraordinary avian wealth, noting that the Union Territory hosts nearly 600 recorded bird species across its wetlands, forests, alpine habitats and riverine ecosystems. He said several of these species are rare, migratory and habitat-sensitive, making the region one of India's most significant biodiver-

sity hotspots.

"Birds are not merely components of our natural heritage; they are essential indicators of environmental health and play a foundational role in sustaining ecosystems through pollination, seed dispersal, pest regulation, scavenging and nutrient cycling," the Minister said.

He observed that avian species serve as natural sentinels of environmental change, with shifts in bird populations often providing early warning signals of habitat degradation, climate disruption and ecological imbalance.

Expressing concern over mounting climate-related pressures, the Minister said that rapid habitat loss, shrinking wetlands, changing migratory patterns, erratic weather events and rising anthropogenic pressures are posing serious threats to avian diversity globally and particularly in ecologically sensitive Himalayan landscapes.

He stressed that addressing these challenges requires a multi-dimensional approach rooted in scientific research, habitat restoration, stronger policy interventions and active community participation.

Javid Dar described the symposium as a timely and visionary initiative that would significantly contribute towards advancing avian research, ecological monitoring and collaborative conservation efforts in

India. He said that such academic platforms are essential for fostering dialogue between scientists, policymakers and local stakeholders to evolve sustainable conservation frameworks capable of responding to present and future environmental challenges.

Highlighting the economic and ecological opportunities linked to avian biodiversity, the Minister said Jammu and Kashmir's pristine lakes, marshes, mountain ranges and river valleys attract birdwatchers, wildlife photographers, researchers and ecotourists from across the globe.

He said that bird-based ecotourism and nature tourism hold immense potential for generating sustainable livelihood opportunities for the local communities while simultaneously incentivizing habitat conservation.

The Minister congratulated SKUAST-Kashmir, the organizers and the Association of Avian Biologists in India (AABI) for successfully bringing together the leading experts, scholars and conservation practitioners on one platform to deliberate upon issues of avian biology and conservation.

Reaffirming the government's commitment to ecological preservation, he said the Jammu and Kashmir government remains steadfast in protecting the region's rich natural heritage and promoting development models that balance economic growth with environmental sustainability.

"Conservation of birds is intrinsically linked to the conservation of our forests, wetlands and water systems. Protecting avian biodiversity is, therefore, central to safeguarding our ecological future," he remarked.

Among the distinguished dignitaries present on the occasion were Professor Nazir Ahmad Ganai, Vice-Chancellor SKUAST-Kashmir,

Dr. Khurshid Ahmad, Professor L. S. Shashidhara, Director NCBS Bangalore, Professor Anand S. Dixit, President AABI besides eminent scientists, researchers and students from various institutions across the country.

BIS Sensitizes Consumers on Quality Standards in Shopian



HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS JAMMU, MAY 16

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of India, organised a Consumer Awareness Programme at Town Hall, Municipal Office Shopian, in collaboration with Municipal Committee Shopian, to educate people about con-

sumer rights, quality standards and product certification.

The programme saw enthusiastic participation from traders, civil society members, students and local consumers.

Scientist-C and Deputy Director, BIS-JKBO, Saaqib Rahi, delivered a detailed presentation on various BIS initiatives related to con-

sumer protection and quality assurance. He highlighted the role of certification marks such as ISI Mark, Hallmarking for jewellery and CRS Mark in ensuring safety and quality of products. Addressing the participants, Standard Promotion Officer, BIS-JKBO, Ashish Kumar Dwivedi, informed consumers about mandatory certification norms un-

der BIS regulations and urged them to verify certification marks before purchasing products.

A demonstration of the BIS Care App was also conducted during the event. Resource Person Syed Sanjeeda explained how the app can be used to verify genuine products and lodge complaints against fake or substandard items available in the market.

BIS officials advised consumers to check for the ISI Mark while buying products like helmets, geysers, pressure cookers and gas stoves, warning that uncertified products may pose serious safety hazards.

Participants appreciated the awareness initiative and called for more such programmes to help consumers make informed choices and access quality-assured products.

The programme concluded with BIS officials reiterating their commitment towards consumer safety and encouraging citizens to actively use the BIS Care App for grievance redressal and product verification.

President Traders Union Shopian, Mushtaq Ahmad, Shopian Civil Society Shopian, Mansoor Magray, and several prominent citizens were present on the occasion.