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Quad ramps up Indo-Pacific surveillance, critical mineral cooperation

We believe strongly that economic resilience should be promoted and supply chains should be strengthened, he noted, adding that the deliberations also touched upon current energy and fertiliser availability and that of critical minerals.

"In the coming days, whether it is economic activity, energy trade or maritime commerce, the Indo-Pacific will become even more important to the world. The responsibilities of the Quad will grow commensurately, and we must prepare for that," he said.

Countering the common threat of terrorism also figured in the talks, the external affairs minister said.

"There must be zero tolerance for terrorism, and nations subject to terrorist attacks have the right to defend themselves," he said.

In his media statement, US Secretary of State Rubio said the Quad meeting decided to launch an Indo-Pacific Maritime Surveillance Cooperation Initiative

It will leverage each of our country's maritime surveillance capabilities in the Indo-Pacific, he said.

Rubio also announced expansion of the Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness Initiative among the Quad nations.

The US secretary of state also said the Quad has decided to roll out a new initiative to boost port infrastructure in the Pacific Islands.

"The reason why maritime security is so important, beyond the fact that current events remind us of what can happen when maritime security is impeded, is the fact that 60 per cent of global maritime trade passes through the Indo-Pacific," Rubio said.

He argued that it is a vital national interest not just to the four Quad countries, but to countless countries around the world.

"The second initiative: we're going to be partnering on issues of port infrastructure, in response to insufficient port capacities in the Pacific Islands," he said.

"We're announcing plans to work with Fiji to advance that country's port infrastructure. It'll be the first time that the Quad partners work together on a port infrastructure project," he said.

Australian Foreign Minister Wong said the Quad recognised efforts towards a diplomatic resolution to ensure freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz.

"We recognised the importance of maintaining the principle of freedom of navigation and our opposition to any tolling proposition," she said, referring to Iran's plan to demand fees for transiting the Strait.

We are working together to strengthen cooperation against scam centres, particularly in Southeast Asia, Wong said.

The Australian foreign minister said the Quad will be coordinating on maritime surveillance efforts initially in the Indian Ocean.

Shah announces high-level panel to study demographic changes

Comprehensive assessment of demographic changes occurring across India due to illegal immigration and other unnatural causes, analyse patterns of abnormal population shifts at the levels of religious and social communities, and present a planned and time-bound solution for the same," he said.

The high-level committee will conduct a scientific evaluation of the demographic changes taking place in different regions of the country due to illegal immigration and other unusual factors, examine their causes, and suggest suitable policy, legislative, and administrative interven-

tions, a government statement said.

According to the Terms of Reference of the committee, it will comprehensively deliberate upon the challenges arising from demographic changes, including illegal immigration.

It will study the possible causes of demographic changes, such as cross-border activities (including illegal immigration), economic opportunities, and other socio-environmental factors, the statement said.

The panel will also identify the underlying factors behind these changes, which include illegal immigration, abnormal settlement patterns, and orchestrated migration, it said.

The committee will analyse structural population changes at the level of religious or social communities, particularly where they deviate from broader trends.

It will recommend a streamlined and permanent operational mechanism for the legal, fair, and time-bound identification, detention, and deportation of illegal immigrants already residing in the country, the statement said.

The committee will also suggest an appropriate institutional mechanism to strengthen border management, population stabilization, and identification systems for the continuous monitoring of such trends, it said.

In addition, it will propose a comprehensive policy framework to enhance coordination between the central and state governments on matters related to illegal immigration and the resulting demographic imbalances.

The committee may also suggest any additional measures it considers necessary to address the challenges resulting from demographic changes, including illegal immigration.

Speaking from the ramparts of the Red Fort in his Independence Day speech last year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced a high-powered demographic mission to tackle the problem.

Modi had said there was a "pre-meditated conspiracy" to change the country's demography through illegal infiltration.

"Today, I want to alert the country about a concern, a challenge. Under a well-thought out conspiracy, the demography of the country is being changed. Seeds of a new crisis are being sown. These 'ghuspaithiye' (infiltrators) are snatching the livelihood of the youth of my country, these 'ghuspaithiye' are targeting the sisters and daughters of my country, this will not be tolerated," he had said.

The prime minister had also said that 'ghuspaithiye' were misleading the innocent tribals and grabbing their land.

Modi had warned that when demographic changes take place, especially in the border areas, they create a national security crisis.

Umer Nabi used fake identity to procure chemicals

anode, a specialised electrode used in an electrolysis process that the accused needed for their chemistry experiments, the sources said, quoting a chargesheet filed by the NIA recently.

According to the revelations made by the accused during their interrogation by the NIA, the electrolysis process was carried out at Umer's flat for making chlorates and perchlorates from a common salt solution - a technique that he learnt in his research.

Chlorates and perchlorates are explosive substances which are normally used in fireworks.

Although it was Umer who purchased the anode, the buyer's name and mobile number mentioned on the challan were those of someone else, the NIA probe has found.

Umer had created a fake identity using the mobile number in the name of "Mr Rahul Bhat" on the IndiaMART commercial platform, and posted his "product of interest as a fertiliser bag, acetone solvent, anode and chemicals, etc".

He contacted the Mumbai shop owner in August 2024 and paid Rs 25,000 through digital payment platform PhonePe, the NIA chargesheet said. The shopkeeper dispatched the anode through a courier company to a delivery address that was just outside Al Falah University, from where Umer collected the anode, it said.

Umer, using the same fake identity, subsequently negotiated for 10 more anodes, but the deal did not materialise due to the busting of the Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind (AGuH) interim terror module, linked to the terrorist organisation Al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), the NIA probe revealed.

The investigating officials found that Umer, along with other charge-sheeted co-accused Dr Muzammil Shakeel, also visited Ahmedabad in Gujarat on April 12 last year in a bid to procure chemicals for manufacturing of explosives. They offered prayers at a nearby mosque and drove back to Al Falah, arriving the next day.

The NIA officials found that the accused, including Umer, followed radical jihadi literature to conduct these experiments, which were later extracted from their mobile devices as part of the investigation, the sources said.

The agency filed a voluminous 7,500-page chargesheet on May 14 against 10 accused in connection with the high-intensity vehicle-borne IED blast that rocked the national capital on November 10 last year, leaving 11 people dead and injuring several others.

India rejects China-Pak references to J&K

termed as "unwarranted references" in the joint statement between China and Pakistan, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said, "India categorically rejects unwarranted references to the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir in the Joint Statement between China and Pakistan."

He said India's position on the matter was "consistent and well known to the concerned parties."

"The Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh have been, and will always remain integral and inalienable parts of India. No other country has the locus standi to comment on the same," the statement said.

The MEA reiterated India's opposition to projects located in territories claimed by India.

"As regards the so-called China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects, some of which are in India's sovereign territory, we resolutely oppose and reject any moves by other countries to reinforce or legitimise Pakistan's illegal and forcible occupation of these territories, impinging on India's sovereignty and territorial integrity," the spokesperson said.

The statement added that India's position had been "clearly conveyed to Pakistani and Chinese authorities several times." The MEA also objected to references regarding "trans-boundary water resources cooperation" between China and Pakistan.

"We have also seen references to the so-called 'trans-boundary water resources cooperation' between China and Pakistan. As the two countries do not share any boundary, the question of so-called 'trans-boundary water resources cooperation' does not arise," the statement said.

New Delhi stated that it had "never recognised the so-called 1963 boundary agreement between Pakistan and China."

The MEA statement came after a joint statement issued by China and Pakistan described the Kashmir issue as "left over from history" and called for its resolution through peaceful means under the framework of the United Nations Security Council.

Kavinder calls for religious tourism circuit for Himachal Pradesh

infrastructure, enhanced connectivity and modern pilgrim facilities.

"Such an initiative will not only strengthen the spiritual identity of the state but will also generate employment opportunities, boost local economy and preserve its rich cultural and religious heritage," he said while interacting with media persons after paying obeisance at the holy Maa Jwala Devi temple here.

He was accompanied by his wife Bindu Gupta. On the occasion, he offered prayers for the peace, prosperity and well-being of the people of Himachal Pradesh and the entire nation and sought the divine blessings of Maa Jwala Devi for happiness and harmony across the country.

"Himachal Pradesh possesses unparalleled spiritual wealth with world-famous shrines including Jwala Devi, Brajeshwari Devi, Chintpurni, Naina Devi, Chamunda Devi and several ancient temples and monasteries spread across the picturesque hills of the state," he said and added that there was an urgent need to integrate these sacred destinations under a comprehensive Religious Tourism Circuit to facilitate pilgrims and attract devotees from across the globe.

Gupta said that religious tourism had the potential to emerge as a major pillar of Himachal Pradesh's economy.

He called upon the state government, the ministry of tourism and all concerned stakeholders to work collectively towards developing world-class facilities for pilgrims while maintaining the sanctity and spiritual essence of these holy places.

The governor also appreciated the temple authorities and the local administration for maintaining the sacred shrine and ensuring smooth arrangements for the devotees visiting the temple.

LG, CM greet people on eid

the spirit of sacrifice, unity, and brotherhood. The sacred occasion serves as a reminder for humanity to embrace the eternal values of love, compassion and forgiveness."

"May this Eid usher in joy, peace and prosperity in everyone's life," he added.

In his message, the chief minister conveyed his heartfelt felicitations to the people of Jammu and Kashmir and beyond. "Eid-ul-Adha symbolizes the spirit of sacrifice, compassion, generosity and obedience to the will of Allah," he said.

Recalling the supreme sacrifice of Hazrat Ibrahim and the unwavering obedience of his son Hazrat Ismail, he said the occasion teaches humanity the values of faith, devotion, patience and submission to the command of Allah.

He said their exemplary legacy continues to inspire people to uphold righteousness, selflessness and compassion in their lives.

He expressed hope that the festival would further strengthen the bonds of brotherhood, communal harmony and mutual respect among people. He urged people to remember the underprivileged and needy during the celebrations and share the joy of the occasion with them.

He prayed for peace, prosperity and wellbeing of the people and wished that the auspicious occasion brings happiness and blessings to every household.

Drone found on Kathua outskirts

the spot and took the drone in their custody.

Police had launched a probe into the matter, officials said.

Culvert collapse leaves woman dead

labourer died on the spot after being trapped under the debris, while 12 others sustained injuries, officials said.

The injured were undergoing treatment at the government medical college & hospital, Doda, where their condition was stated to be stable.

In another incident, around 15 persons were injured after a minibus met with an accident near Papp Nagar, Doda.

LG Sinha chairs high-level meeting of Central Committee of J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages



SRINAGAR, MAY 26: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha today chaired a high-level meeting of the Central Committee of Jammu Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL), at Lok Bhavan.

The meeting was attended by Shri Atal Dulloo, Chief Secretary; Shri Shailendra Kumar, Additional Chief Secretary, Finance Department; Dr Mandeep K Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor; Shri Brij Mohan Sharma, Principal Secretary Culture; Shri Ram Niwas Sharma, Commissioner Secretary, Higher Education Department; Ms. Harvinder Kour, Secretary JKAACL; Dr Satish Vimal; Prof Bashir Bashir, and Principals of Institute of Music and Fine Arts, University of Jammu

and University of Kashmir. The Central Committee granted in-principle approval to several key proposals, including affiliation for continuing Calligraphy Course, Annual Plan of Expenditure for the FY 2026-27 and the designing of a new Academy logo, which will feature all five official languages of Jammu Kashmir.

The Lieutenant Governor directed for accelerating the digitization process of all Academy libraries and implementing a well-crafted plan for capacity building of the Academy artists and staff. He instructed the Academy to expedite the process of accreditation of artists and filling the vacant posts.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasised that a comprehensive strategy involving the Education, Sports, and

Culture departments must be formulated to promote vibrant cultural activities in schools and colleges to boost youth engagement.

The Lieutenant Governor also applauded the Culture Academy's performance in the Vande Mataram initiative.

Shri Brij Mohan Sharma, Principal Secretary, Culture Department, gave a detailed presentation highlighting JKAACL's recent milestones.

The committee was informed that the Academy successfully organized over 470 events across Jammu, Kashmir, and other parts of the country, engaging 14,117 artists and writers. Major commemorative events included 150 Years of Vande Mataram celebrations, Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat, Har Ghar Tiranga Yatra, Nukkad Natak under

Nasha Mukh J&K Campaign, Samvidhaan Hatya Diwas, Birth Anniversary of Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee, and Constitution Day.

It was further informed that The Jammu & Kashmir Tableau was a major attraction during the Rashtriya Ekta Diwas celebrations at Ekta Nagar, Gujarat, on 31st October 2025. Furthermore, the J&K Tableau clinched the Second Prize at the Republic Day Parade 2026 in New Delhi, a historic national achievement for the Union Territory after 24 years.

The Committee also reviewed the Action Taken Report from the previous meeting which was held in 2021. On the occasion, a Shina-Urdu dictionary and Annual Report of the Academy were also released.

HED enables tentative college allotment, indicative cut-off trends for UG Admissions

SRINAGAR, MAY 26:

To help applicants make informed choices ahead of final seat allocation for UG admissions 2026-27, the Higher Education Department, J&K, has enabled Tentative College Allotment and indicative cut-off trends on the admission portal, <https://jkadmissions.in>, generated from current application data. The trends, presently based on General/Open Merit data, are meant only to give a fair idea of the likely competition across programmes and colleges. Applicants of all categories, including reserved categories, are advised to review and, if required, modify their preferences before the final locking/allocation.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to add more eligible programme preferences, include options across multiple colleges/universities, avoid limiting themselves to only a few highly competitive programmes, and arrange their preferences carefully in order of priority. The Directorate has clarified that the displayed cut-offs are purely indicative and provisional — they are not final and do not guarantee admission. Final allotment may vary with category-wise seat distribution, number of applicants per category, preference changes, seat upgradation/withdrawal, document verification, merit and tie-breaking rules, university-specific policies, and any subsequent administrative decisions. The final allotment list has not yet been published, and the admission authority reserves the right to revise outcomes, cut-offs, seat matrices, or policies at any stage without prior notice.

Director Colleges J&K, Dr. Sheikh Ajaz Bashir, urged applicants to treat the trends as a guidance tool, to broaden and re-prioritise their preferences accordingly, and to make use of the Course Explorer option on the Directorate website <https://directorcollegesjk.in>, and by visiting the Counselling & Facilitation Centres at every college. Applicants may follow the official WhatsApp Channel for Admissions 2026-27, linked on the portal, for regular updates.

GDC Bandipora organizes Cleanliness Drive, Awareness Session under NMBA

BANDIPORA, MAY 26:

Under the banner of Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyaan (NMBA), Government Degree College (GDC) Bandipora organized a cleanliness drive and an awareness-cum-counselling session on Tuesday as part of its continued efforts towards promoting a healthy, disciplined and drug-free society.

The cleanliness drive was organized by the College Cleanliness and Beautification Committee in collaboration with the Red Ribbon Youth Club. The programme witnessed active participation from students and volunteers who carried out cleanliness activities within and around the college campus to promote hygiene, environmental awareness and social responsibility. The drive aimed to en-



courage students to adopt healthy habits and contribute positively towards building a clean, healthy and drug-free society. The participants displayed great enthusiasm and commitment

during the programme, reflecting the spirit of community service and collective responsibility.

Meanwhile, the College NCDRC Cell in collaboration with the Admission

Committee organized an awareness and counselling session for fresh students seeking admission to the college for the academic session 2026-27.

During the session, students were educated about the harmful effects of drug abuse and the importance of maintaining a healthy, disciplined and responsible lifestyle. The students were also counselled regarding the social, psychological and academic consequences of substance abuse and were encouraged to actively contribute towards building a safe and drug-free educational environment.

The programmes reflected the college's continued commitment towards awareness, prevention and student wellbeing through meaningful outreach and counselling initiatives.