

Cont. From Page 1

Landmark India-UK trade pact takes effect, cutting tariffs

labour-intensive industries, offering zero-duty market access for 99 per cent of the country's exports.

"The agreement is the key to a Viksit Bharat as envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi." The treaty is set to unlock untapped potential across labour-intensive industries, offering zero-duty market access for 99 pc of Indian exports, including those in textiles, leather, engineering, food processing, pharmaceuticals and MSME," he said on X.

"The treaty stands as a testament to the Centre's pro-people diplomacy. It will also extend significant exemptions to Indian professionals in the UK," Shah said.

The CETA was signed between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his UK counterpart Keir Starmer in July last year.

The pact is expected to at least double the trade between the two countries from the current annual levels of estimated 48 billion pounds by 2030, and boost their GDPs by nearly 5 billion pounds every year in the long run.

Showcase Jammu, hold sightseeing tours for pilgrims: LG to officials

from Jammu in the form of beautiful local handmade products and unforgettable memories," he said.

"Together, we resolve to make this year's pilgrimage truly historic," he added.

The LG also reviewed the deployment of food safety officers at community kitchens, facilities at reception and lodgement centres, on-spot registrations of pilgrims, transportation and security arrangements.

He directed the officials to optimise manpower deployment to seamlessly manage the heavy influx of devotees throughout the yatra.

He said the officials concerned must also closely monitor the meteorological department's predictions and remain alert to any weather vagaries.

Divisional Commissioner, Jammu, Ramesh Kumar informed the meeting about the legal action initiated against the individuals caught engaged in fraudulent practices.

The LG then directed that administrative and legal measures ought to be taken against any official found involved in misconduct.

He also interacted with the devotees of Shri Amarnathji and wished them a safe, peaceful and blessed pilgrimage.

Besides the divisional commissioner, the LG was accompanied by IGP (Jammu) Bhim Sen Tuti, CRPF IG (Jammu sector) Amol V Homkar, deputy commissioner Rakesh Minhas, municipal commissioner, Jammu, Devansh Yadav, and senior officials from civil administration, police and security forces.

Buddha Amarnath Yatra from Aug 17

being made, and the district administration is also reviewing the preparations for smooth and successful conduct of the yatra," officials said.

Ex-sarpanch killed in road accident

critically. He was rushed to the district Hospital, Ramban, where doctors declared him brought dead. Police had taken cognizance of the incident.

JU bans blacklisted authors, publishers

the withdrawal of all printed material authored or published by them from the Union Territory.

The circular, addressed to all Rectors, Directors, Heads of Teaching Departments and the In-charge Librarian of Dhanvantri Library, states that the banned authors are Hilal Ahmad, Santosh Meena and Dr Sushant Giri, while the blacklisted publishers are Oberoi Book Service, Jammu, and Anurag Prakashan, Delhi.

University authorities have directed all departments to ensure that no books or other printed material are procured from the listed authors or publishers in future.

They have also been instructed to identify and withdraw any such publications available in their offices, departments, libraries or digital repositories in strict compliance with the government order.

As part of the exercise, a comprehensive audit and inspection of all libraries, offices and digital repositories has been ordered to certify that no such material exists within the University.

CISF DG reviews yatra arrangements

During the visit, Ranjan interacted with security personnel and pilgrims, took stock of the security framework on the ground and underscored the importance of maintaining operational readiness, continuous vigilance and seamless coordination among all stakeholder agencies.

He later chaired a high-level security review meeting attended by senior officers of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), police, Intelligence Bureau, Army and other agencies associated with the annual pilgrimage, officials said.

Commending the professionalism and coordination among the security forces, the CISF DD expressed confidence in their continued commitment to ensuring smooth, safe and incident-free conduct of the annual pilgrimage.

MHA proposes recruitment rules at I4C

the Central government) in the Senior Administrative Grade (SAG).

The ministry has invited comments from stakeholders on the proposed rules by August 14, after which the recruitment rules will be finalised.

The proposed posts will function under the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C), which operates under the Cyber and Information Security Division of the MHA.

These posts will not fall under the purview of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) and the appointments

will be made on a deputation basis under the Non-Central Staffing Scheme pattern.

The selection for these posts will be carried out with the approval of the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, through a Search-cum-Selection Committee headed by the Union Home Secretary.

On July 14, the MHA circulated an official memorandum regarding the move to all the stakeholders seeking their suggestions. In the memorandum, all the stakeholders are asked to submit their comments to the MHA.

"The undersigned is directed to state that the Ministry of Home Affairs intends to frame the Recruitment Rules for the post of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Additional Chief Executive Officer (Addl. CEO) at the Level of Senior Administrative Grade (SAG) in Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) under Cyber and Information Security (CIS) division of Ministry of Home Affairs. These posts do not fall under the purview of the Union Public Service Commission and will be filled on a deputation basis on the 'Non-Central Staffing Scheme' pattern, with the approval of the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet, through Search-cum-Selection Committee under the Chairmanship of the Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs," reads the memorandum.

"It is requested that comments of all the stakeholders, if any, on the proposed Recruitment Rules may be forwarded to the Under Secretary (Cyber Crime), Cyber and Information Security Division, Ministry of Home Affairs, by August 14, 2026. The Recruitment Rules for the post of Chief Executive Officer and Additional Chief Executive Officer would be finalised after considering the comments so received."

As per the proposal, there will initially be one CEO post in 2026, although the number may vary depending on workload. The CEO post has been classified as a General Central service, group 'A', gazetted, non-ministerial position carrying Pay Matrix Level-15. Similarly, three Additional CEO posts have been proposed for 2026, also subject to variation based on operational requirements. These will also be group 'A', gazetted, non-Ministerial posts in Pay Matrix Level-14.

The ministry has proposed that both posts be filled exclusively through deputation. Direct recruitment, promotion, probation and selection provisions have not been prescribed for these appointments.

For the CEO post, officers from the All-India Services, organised group 'A' services or other Central or state government departments, Union Territories, autonomous or statutory organisations, public sector undertakings, universities and recognised research institutions will be eligible. Applicants must either be holding an analogous post regularly or have completed at least three years of regular service in Level-14 of the Pay Matrix or an equivalent grade.

The essential educational qualification for the CEO post is a bachelor's degree from a recognised university or institute, along with a minimum of five years of experience in cyber security, cybercrime investigation, cyber forensics, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), or internal security.

The ministry has also listed 'desirable qualifications', including a postgraduate degree or postgraduate diploma in Computer Applications, Law, Cyber Law, Cyber Forensics, Computer Science or Information Technology from a recognised institution.

For the Additional CEO posts, eligibility has been widened to include officers holding analogous posts or those with two years' regular service in Level-13A or three years' regular service in Level-13 of the Pay Matrix. Candidates for the Additional CEO posts must possess a bachelor's degree from a recognised institution and at least 10 years' experience in establishment, administration, procurement, finance, vigilance or legal matters, including a minimum of three years' experience in cyber security, cybercrime investigation, cyber forensics, ICT or internal security. The same desirable qualifications relating to postgraduate studies in computer applications, cyber law, cyber forensics, computer science and information technology have also been prescribed for the Additional CEO positions.

The proposed rules further state that the period of deputation, including any previous deputation in another ex-cadre post immediately preceding the appointment, will ordinarily not exceed five years. The maximum age limit for appointment on deputation, including short-term contract, has been fixed at 55 years as of the closing date for receipt of applications.

The memorandum also specifies that no Departmental Promotion Committee will be constituted for these posts and consultation with the Union Public Service Commission will not be required.

India-EU ties advanced after summit at Brussels talks: EAM

mit had yielded a landmark Free Trade Agreement and a new Security and Defence Partnership.

Jaishankar began his Brussels visit with a meeting with Kallas, where they discussed the West Asia conflict, peace and stability, and the importance of safe and unimpeded maritime commerce.

He said they also spoke about taking the India-EU Strategic Partnership forward to ensure supply chain resilience.

In a social media post, Jaishankar said, "Started my visit to Brussels, meeting with EU HRVP Kaja Kallas. Had useful discussions on West Asia and the need to ensure peace and stability. Exchanged views on the importance of safe and unimpeded maritime commerce."

Kallas described it as a "historic year for EU-India relations" and said, "This is a historic year for EU-India relations, with our cooperation deepening across trade, technology, security and defence. It was good to speak today with @DrSJaishankar about taking our partnership further, including on maritime security."

She added, "Together, we must defend freedom of navigation, protect open and resilient supply chains, as well as deepen cooperation between EU operations ATALANTA and ASPIDES and the Indian navy to uphold security in the

Indo-Pacific and beyond."

The external affairs minister also met Minister-President of Flanders Matthias Diependaele and Minister Annick De Ridder. Referring to the talks, Jaishankar said, "The India-EU FTA has enabled a wide range of possibilities for India's cooperation with Belgium. Discussed opportunities for businesses and investments from the Flanders region." The meetings in Brussels centred on expanding India-EU engagement across trade, technology and security, while also looking at business opportunities with Belgium.

J&K Bank crosses 30,000 loan sanctions

mitment to promoting youth entrepreneurship and employment across the Union Territory.

The bank has sanctioned 30,063 loans under the scheme, while over 26,580 loans have already been disbursed, enabling thousands of aspiring entrepreneurs to establish sustainable livelihood ventures.

Congratulating the bank staff on this achievement, Managing Director and CEO Amitava Chatterjee termed the milestone a proud moment and credited the dedication and tireless efforts of employees across the bank's network for the success.

He said Mission YUVA is a transformative initiative focused on empowering youth through entrepreneurship and assured that J&K Bank remains fully committed to supporting the government's vision by providing timely financial assistance and handholding to deserving entrepreneurs.

Chatterjee expressed confidence that the Bank would achieve all assigned targets within the stipulated timelines while continuing to play a key role in creating employment opportunities and strengthening the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Jammu and Kashmir.

US senators unveil Bill for 100 pc tariffs on India

have so narrowly crafted and tailored and targeted this bill to aim at the major purchaser of Russian oil and gas."

At the press conference on Capitol Hill, Republican and Democratic senators stood shoulder-to-shoulder to present the bill as a tribute to Graham, the South Carolina senator, who passed away in the wee hours of Sunday (July 12, 2026).

Senator Katie Britt, a Republican from Alabama, said Graham had worked "tirelessly, relentlessly" to bring the measure together and believed it would become the most consequential legislation of his career.

Senator Roger Wicker, a Republican from Mississippi, described the bill as Graham's greatest achievement in the cause of preserving peace in Europe.

Senator Jeanne Shaheen, a Democrat from New Hampshire and the ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee, urged Congress to seize the "narrow window to pass the legislation".

Last month, the US had proposed to impose 12.5 pc tariffs on 54 countries, including India, for allegedly failing to prohibit the import of goods produced with forced labour.

Hole in field triggers search operation near IB

launched a search operation, besides doing some digging of the hole to verify its nature.

However, after a detailed inspection, the possibility of the presence of a cross-border tunnel was ruled out, officials said.

Officials said technical experts were also engaged to examine the suspected opening to determine whether it was linked to a cross-border tunnel used for infiltration by the Pakistan-based terrorists.

The opening was found to be merely a hole in the ground and there was no evidence of any underground tunnel or cross-border infiltration route, officials said.

"As the Pak-based terrorists have in the past used such tunnels to sneak into the Indian territory, security forces continue to maintain heightened vigilance along the border," the officials added.

Early this month, the BSF had undertaken a massive anti-tunnelling operation along the IB to detect and prevent any cross-border infiltration attempts through underground tunnels.

Between 2011 and 2021, the BSF unearthed nearly a dozen cross-border tunnels along the IB in the Jammu, Samba and Kathua districts on different occasions.

Bhairav Yatra of Rajouri added to ICH list

border district just before Holi. Dedicated to Almighty Kaal Bhairava, the festival preserves the region's deep spiritual and cultural roots.

"Proud moment for Rajouri! The district's historic Bhairav Yatra has officially been added to National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage of India," the LG said in a post on X.

"Congratulations to the Rajouri district administration and the department of culture for turning this dream into a reality. This prestigious recognition will go a long way in documenting, preserving, and celebrating the area's deep spiritual and cultural roots," he added.

"This national honour validates the generations of devotees who kept this tradition alive. The inclusion of Bhairav Yatra in National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage will strengthen Rajouri's unique cultural footprint on the national stage and it will open the door for research, cultural exchange, and sustainable heritage tourism," Sinha said.

Amid tight security, 6,251 pilgrims leave for valley base camps

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 marks the beginning of one of the country's 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.

Country heading towards economic crisis due to Modi govt's policies: Cong

conceal the alarming inflation figures, he alleged.

"The latest wholesale inflation data stands as stark evidence of the Modi government's economic mismanagement and failure," Ramesh said.

When every section of society is in distress, where exactly do the government's priorities lie, he asked.

"Prime Minister, the nation demands answers from you regarding inflation; after governing for 12 years, you alone must answer for this economic failure," he said.

The wholesale price inflation rose to 9.87 per cent in June, from 9.68 per cent in May, led by a sharp spike in prices of non-food and food products.

The latest wholesale price index (WPI) inflation data is based on the 2022-23 base year.

According to the data, food inflation rose to 5.49 per cent in June, from 3.60 per cent in May, as food prices rose during the month following a rainfall deficit due to the El Nino impact.

Non-food articles WPI inflation was also higher at 11.07 per cent, while in minerals it was 9.45 per cent in June.

WPI inflation in fuel and power was down to 27.41 per cent in June, from a peak of 30.33 per cent in May. In manufactured products, inflation was unchanged at 7.48 per cent as in May.

No change in plan for Delhi protest: Omar

nounced its programme to hold protests beginning July 20 against the Centre in the national capital over the "unexplained delay" in restoring statehood to the Union Territory.

"There will be no change in that," Abdullah told reporters in Srinagar.

Asked if the party had got permission for the July 20 protest at Jantar Mantar in Delhi, the chief minister said no permission had been granted yet.

"Not yet. We have been kept waiting. As I have stated, we know how to keep patience," he said.

"If permission at Jantar Mantar is denied, the party will keep an alternate plan ready for the protest. I have told my colleagues who expressed apprehensions about the permission that we will definitely go to Delhi on July 19. If we do not get permission for Jantar Mantar, we will sit and discuss there what to do. But we will leave for Delhi on July 19," he said.

Kavinder encourages youth to explore green entrepreneurship

havi' programme, organized by a leading vernacular daily group at Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla, where over 600 meritorious students from more than 35 schools across Shimla district were felicitated for their outstanding academic achievements.

"Himachal Pradesh possesses a rich treasure of medicinal herbs, aromatic plants and other high-value crops, which can generate sustainable livelihood opportunities for thousands of young people through scientific cultivation, value addition and innovation," he said.

"If our youth combine innovation with the state's rich natural resources, Himachal Pradesh has the potential to emerge not only as the horticulture hub of India but also as the capital of green entrepreneurship," the governor said.

"Education is not merely about securing high marks in examinations but also about shaping character, inspiring innovation and empowering young minds to contribute meaningfully to society and nation-building," he said.

He described the meritorious students as representatives of the strong, progressive and value-based India envisioned by the country's freedom fighters.

He said the achievements of the students reflected the power of hard work, determination and an unquenchable thirst for knowledge.

He appreciated their excellence not only in academics but also in co-curricular and extracurricular activities, observing that true education extends far beyond textbooks.

Gupta urged students to remain vigilant against the growing menace of drug abuse. Describing substance abuse as one of the greatest threats to society, he appealed to youth to stay away from drugs and motivate their friends and classmates to do the same.

"A drug-free Himachal is the foundation of a strong and prosperous Himachal," he remarked.

On the occasion, Gupta also launched the 'Kalam of Himachal' initiative introduced by Vidyapeeth Institute.

Earlier, State Bureau Chief of the daily, Rajesh Mandhotra welcomed the governor and briefed the audience about the programme.

Welcoming the governor, Vice-Chancellor of Himachal Pradesh University, Prof Mahavir Singh said that hard work was the key to success and encouraged students to embrace future challenges with confidence.

"While Artificial Intelligence has introduced new dimensions to education, it has also created immense opportunities," he said.

He highlighted the university's efforts to prepare students for the future through the establishment of five new academic centres and the upcoming solar panel manufacturing initiative on the campus.

Director, Vidyapeeth Institute, Ramesh Sharma welcomed the governor, while Director Ravinder Awasthi presented vote of thanks.

The governor's secretary Sandeep Bhardwaj, parents, teachers, faculty members and other distinguished guests were among those present on the occasion.

District Admin Bandipora organises first-ever Extended Producer Responsibility Convention in Gurez

BANDIPORA, JULY 15: In a landmark step towards environmental conservation and sustainable tourism, the District Administration Bandipora on Wednesday organised the first-ever Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Convention at the Auditorium, Government HSS Dawar, Gurez, bringing together senior functionaries of the Government of India, district administration, Indian Army, leading national brands and civil society on a single platform.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, presented a detailed proposal on the roadmap to make Gurez a complete No-Plastic Zone. She said the convention had

been organised to bring together companies whose products generate plastic waste like bottles, cans, chips packets, biscuit wrappers and other packaged materials, so that they actively participate in managing the waste generated from their products.

Observing that the growing influx of tourists has made waste management a major challenge, she cautioned camping tent owners, hoteliers and business establishments that strict action shall be initiated under the relevant rules in case of failure to discharge their statutory obligations. Invoking the enduring legacy of Habba Khatoon, the DC urged businesses and shopkeepers to extend wholehearted support to the administration in preserving the pris-

tine character of the valley, and announced that informative signboards highlighting Gurez's medicinal, ecological and heritage values would be installed en-route to promote responsible tourism.

In her virtual address, the Joint Secretary, Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Ministry of Jal Shakti and Mission Director, Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen), emphasised that all stakeholders must act as the true owners of their home and preserve every aspect of it. She highlighted the provisions of the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026, particularly the responsibilities cast upon Bulk Waste Generators, and urged all stakeholders to fulfil their mandate under the

rules. She advised the administration to issue advisories for visiting tourists and called for special measures to balance the ecological sensitivity of Gurez with its growing tourism potential, underscoring the spirit of Jan Bhagidari.

Amit Love of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, joining virtually, deliberated in depth on the provisions of Extended Producer Responsibility and suggested that the district draw upon successful models from across the country and adapt them for implementation in Gurez. Experts from the CPCB/SPCB dwelt on the responsibilities of producers and brand owners under the Plastic Waste Management Rules, while Krishi Vigyan Kendra Gurez conducted

live hands-on demonstrations on waste segregation and composting.

Speaking on the occasion, the Commanding Officer, 109 Infantry Brigade, described Gurez as the Crown of the Union Territory and stressed the need to accord the highest priority to cleanliness as the valley rises on the national tourist map.

Representatives of the Gurez Sub-Division Traders Association shared their experiences on the challenges in implementing EPR at the local level.

An interactive session chaired by the Deputy Commissioner followed, in which she, along with SDM Gurez, ACP Bandipora, Tehsildar Gurez, BDOs and SDPO, responded to a range of queries raised by stakeholders.

The convention was attended by SDM Gurez, ACP Bandipora, DIO Bandipora, BDOs and EOs from across Bandipora, Tehsildar Gurez, ARTO Bandipora, ZEO Gurez, senior officers of the Army, Police and civil administration, officers from CPCB/SPCB and KVK Gurez, representatives of producers, distributors and brand owners including Bisleri, Coca-Cola India, PepsiCo India, Amul, Parle, HUL, ITC, Dabur and Nestlé India, along with the Gurez Trade Association, retailers, shopkeepers, transporters, tour operators, hoteliers, homestay operators, bulk waste generators, NRLM Self-Help Groups, students, NCC cadets, teachers, civil society members and religious leaders.