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Roads, tunnels as crucial as weapons in future wars: Rajnath

future. The infrastructure we are building today will define our civilisation for the next one or two centuries," he said. Stressing that infrastructure development is a shared responsibility, the Defence Minister urged industry, academia, engineers, and administrators to work together. "Together, we must create an ecosystem that fosters excellence, where every stakeholder performs their role with utmost dedication," he said. Director General Border Roads Lt Gen Harpal Singh said strategic capability was no longer measured solely by physical assets but by the efficiency with which infrastructure was planned, executed and maintained. "The measure of strategic capability is no longer defined solely by what we build; it is increasingly determined by how intelligently we plan, how rapidly we execute, how effectively we monitor, and how sustainably we maintain infrastructure assets," he said. He added that the BRO has embarked on an organisational transformation driven by technology, innovation and institutional reforms, with greater emphasis on digital planning, AI-enabled solutions, mechanisation, modern construction methodologies, and stronger collaboration with industry and academia to develop resilient, future-ready strategic infrastructure. During the conclave, Rajnath Singh presented awards to BRO projects for excellence in infrastructure development and launched two digital platforms for project management and recruitment as part of the organisation's digital transformation. He also released three BRO publications, Path Pradarshak, Oonchi Sadken, and Path Vikas.

LG chairs SMVDSB meeting, reviews donation management system
The board also appreciated the comprehensive safeguards and monitoring mechanisms adopted to ensure that the sacred offerings made by devotees were managed with the highest standards of integrity, financial discipline and public trust.

The meeting was attended by Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board officials - Mahamandleshwar Swami Vishveshvaranand Giriiji Maharaj, Baleshwar Rai, Ashok Bhan, Sudha Murty, Gunjan Rana, K K Talwar, Kulbhushan Ahuja, Lalit Bhasin, Suresh Kumar Sharma - LG's principal secretary Mandeep K Bhandari, SMVDSB's chief executive officer Sachin Kumar Vaishya, SMVDSB's additional CEO Alok Kumar Maurya and other senior officials, in person and through virtual mode, at Spiritual Growth Centre, Katra.

Sinha pays obeisance at Bhawan
Goddess. He spent some time at the cave shrine and prayed for peace, health and prosperity of all. According to officials, the LG also had a brief interaction with the officials concerned at the Bhawan.

ACB arrests patwari in graft case
Station, Jammu, against Khajan Chand, patwari of Patwar Halqa, Mahanpur, for demanding and accepting illegal gratification from the complainant. The complaint alleged that the accused had demanded Rs 20,000 to provide documents and a copy of the mutation after the mutation had been attested in favour of the complainant's sister.

The complainant was alleged to have already paid Rs 9,000, but the patwari continued to demand the remaining Rs 11,000. After negotiations, the amount was allegedly settled at Rs 10,000, officials said. Unwilling to pay the bribe, the complainant approached ACB and sought legal action against the accused. Following receipt of the complaint, ACB conducted a discreet verification, which confirmed the allegations against him. Subsequently, a formal case was registered. During investigation, ACB constituted a special team, which successfully laid a trap. The accused patwari was caught red-handed while accepting Rs 10,000 as bribe from the complainant in the presence of independent witnesses, officials said. The accused was arrested after completing all legal formalities. The tainted bribe amount was also recovered from his possession in the presence of independent witnesses associated with the trap proceedings, the officials added. Officials said that searches were also carried out at the residential premises of the accused in accordance with the provisions of law and in the presence of independent witnesses. Further investigation into the case was underway, officials said.

FCRA amendment, Vande Mataram Bill on govt agenda
Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026, which has been listed for introduction, consideration and passage in both Houses of Parliament. The Bill seeks to amend the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971.

According to sources, the proposed amendments aim to give the national song Vande Mataram the same statutory protection as the national anthem Jana Gana Mana and make any insult to or obstruction of the singing of Vande

Mataram a punishable offence. The government has also listed the Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Bill, 2026 for introduction, consideration and passage. The proposed legislation seeks to amend Section 13(3) of the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969, as amended in 2023, to make provisions relating to delayed registration more stringent. According to sources, births and deaths reported after two years may be registered only on the order of a first-class judicial magistrate, replacing the existing provision under which such cases can be approved by a district magistrate, sub-divisional magistrate or executive magistrate. The session is also expected to see the government take up the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025. The Bill proposes a major overhaul of higher education by replacing the University Grants Commission (UGC), the All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) with a unified regulatory framework, besides introducing the Income-tax (Amendment) Bill, 2026 and the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development (Amendment) Bill, 2026. The session is expected to see the government push several key legislative measures alongside discussions on major national issues.

Cong to join NC's statehood push
J&K Congress in-charge G A Mir told reporters. He said the party had chosen not to seek ministerial positions despite having the opportunity, as it believed the people's mandate was for the restoration of statehood and powers to the elected government. "There is no point in becoming ministers when there are no real powers," he added. Referring to the NC's proposed protest at Jantar Mantar on July 20, Mir said the Congress welcomed the call and would participate in the programme.

NTA declares NEET-UG results
joint toppers, scoring 715 out of 720 marks, the NTA said. Earlier in the day, the NTA released the final answer keys for the NEET UG 2026 re-exam held on June 21. Nearly 20 lakh candidates appeared for the NEET-UG 2026 re-examination on June 21 at 5,440 centres across 551 cities in India and 14 overseas cities. The re-test was held after the May 3 examination for more than 20 lakh students was cancelled over allegations of a paper leak.

NEET-UG is the country's largest undergraduate medical entrance examination and serves as the gateway for admission to MBBS, BDS and other undergraduate medical programmes in government and private institutions across India.

Court allows Er Rashid to attend Monsoon Session
era. Rashid was arrested for allegedly funding separatists and terror groups in Jammu and Kashmir. He has been lodged in Delhi's Tihar Jail since 2019 after the NIA arrested him in the 2017 terror-funding case. After being named in a chargesheet in October 2019, a special NIA court framed charges against Rashid and others in March 2022 under sections 120B (criminal conspiracy), 121 (waging war against the government) and 124A (sedition) of the Indian Penal Code and for offences relating to terrorist acts and terror funding under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

Iran threatens to destroy 'all infra in region'
"All the infrastructure in the region will be crushed under the steel blows of the powerful armed forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran" should Trump's threat be carried out, Zolfaghari said. "Under no circumstances and in no way will we allow America, as a foreign and extra-regional country, to interfere in the Strait of Hormuz," he added. "This is Iran's invincible red line."

15th batch of 5,201 pilgrims leaves for Amarnathji cave shrine
in Ganderbal district. The yatra will conclude on August 28. Authorities have put in place multi-layered security arrangements along the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway and at all transit camps to ensure the safe and smooth movement of the yatra convoys. A multi-tier security setup has been activated in and around the Bhagwati Nagar base camp. The commencement of the yatra 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.

Meanwhile, Mahant Deependra Giri, the custodian of Chhari-Mubarak of Swami Amarnathji, announced the annual pilgrimage of the holy mace of Almighty Shiva for the ongoing yatra to the south Kashmir Himalayas. "As per the age-old tradition, 'Bhoomi-Pujan', 'Navgrah

ensure timely and authenticated uploading of departmental data. The PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan, launched by the Government of India in October 2021, is a flagship initiative to promote integrated infrastructure planning through a GIS-enabled digital platform. The technical team from the Industries & Commerce Department, the nodal department for implementation of PM Gati Shakti in Jammu and Kashmir, delivered presentations on the components and functionalities of the portal. The sessions covered an overview of the National Master Plan, portal access procedures, live demonstrations of portal functionalities, the Data Upload Management System (DUMS), analytical tools and the data management framework. Participants interacted with the resource persons and discussed departmental requirements, operational challenges and measures for strengthening use of the platform. The training sessions were conducted by Technical Expert (PM Gati Shakti, J&K) Santosh Kumar Rai, Yudhishther Seth and Naseer A Mir, who provided guidance and technical support to participants on the features and applications of the portal.

Pujan' and 'Dhawajarahan' connected with traditional commencement of annual pilgrimage of Chhari-Mubarak shall be performed at Pahalgam on auspicious occasion of 'Ashad-Purnima' (Vyas-Purnima) on July 29 this year," he said. "The Chhari-Mubarak shall be taken to the Shankracharya Temple on August 12 and Sharika Bhawani Temple on August 13 before rituals are performed for Chhari-Shapana at Shri Amareshwar Temple Dashnami Akhara, Srinagar, on August 15," Giri said. "Traditional Chhari-Pujan shall be performed at Dashnami Akhara, Srinagar, on August 17 on the auspicious occasion of 'Nag-Panchami'. Embarking on the main course of pilgrimage on August 22, the holy mace will be taken to the shrine of Swami Amarnathji to perform Pujan and have 'Darshan' on auspicious occasion of 'Shravan-Purnima' on August 28," he said. "There will be night halts at Pahalgam on August 22 and 23, Chandanwari on 24, Sheshnag on 25 and at Panchtarani on 26 and 27, respectively," he said. "A letter has been sent to the Union Territory government for making all the necessary arrangements to preserve the age-old traditions and ensure the movement of Chhari-Mubarak as per schedule and take all the preventive measures for the safety and security," he added.

Congress vows to defeat Constitution amendment bills
owners, unbridled deforestation, and the continued assault on the rights of SCs, STs, OBCs and minorities are among the critical issues on which the Congress Party will hold the Modi government accountable during the forthcoming Monsoon Session of Parliament."

These pressing concerns affecting the lives and aspirations of the people were deliberated upon during the meeting, Kharge said. Addressing a press conference after the meeting, Ramesh said, "We have learnt that the Union Home Minister (Amit Shah) is making efforts to bring back the Delimitation Bill. The government failed to secure a two-thirds majority on 17th April and suffered a significant setback. It now wants to reintroduce the Bill." This was discussed along with the Constitution amendment bill which seeks the removal of ministers in custody for 30 days over serious offences, he said. "The Congress Party has consistently maintained that it will strongly oppose the Delimitation Bill and will continue to do so. We will also make every effort to maintain the unity and solidarity of all Opposition parties. Similarly, we will firmly oppose the proposed Constitution Amendment Bill related to the removal of ministers," he said. There was also some discussion on the 'One Nation, One Election' on which a JPC has been constituted, Ramesh said. "We will also oppose the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill in its entirety. It is possible that the Bill may be introduced during this session. There is also a possibility that the FCRA Amendment Bill will be introduced. We will oppose it as well. We had opposed it earlier, following which the government withdrew the Bill. However, we are now hearing that it may be brought back," Ramesh said.

Another important issue discussed was the proposed amendments to the National Food Security Act, 2013, which forms the basis of the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, he said. "We are completely opposed to these proposed amendments, and if the Bill is introduced during this session, we will strongly oppose it. As far as the legislative agenda is concerned, I do not see any Bill before us that we can support," Ramesh said. The Congress is strongly opposed to the two Constitution amendment bills, he said. "We have demanded several times that women's reservation be implemented on the current strength of the Lok Sabha and if the government is willing to do that we will support it," the Congress leader said.

The Home Minister has "split parties" and is looking to manage two-thirds majority by "cunningness" which would be an insult to the Constitution, he said, adding that such a majority would be a "blot on democracy". The BJP, however, will not be able to get a two-thirds majority in the Lok Sabha, Ramesh asserted. "Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi and Congress president Mallikarjun are in touch with all parties that had supported us on April 16 and 17 in defeating the government's delimitation bill," he said.

The opposition INDIA bloc will also hold its strategy meet on Monday ahead of the start of the session to evolve its joint strategy. The Government will meet leaders of various parties on Sunday to discuss various issues to be taken up during the session. The Government is likely to bring up crucial legislation, including the Constitution amendment bill on introducing delimitation and increase of Lok Sabha seats, besides one pertaining to the removal of the prime minister, chief ministers and Union ministers on being jailed. The opposition is also gearing up to take on the Government on crucial issues, including the NEET paper leak case and the alleged embezzlement of donations at the Ram temple in Ayodhya, besides raising issues of rising oil prices and the Indo-US trade deal. The monsoon session of Parliament is starting on July 20 and is likely to continue till August 13.

Govt grants carbon neutrality recognition to ethanol

permitting specified reductions in declared tailpipe carbon dioxide emissions before compliance assessment. For the present levels of ethanol, 8 pc CNF shall be considered, while for CBG and biofuel, the reduction shall be based on the prevailing actual blending level. The ministry has sought suggestions and feedback from stakeholders and the public in respect of these draft norms. These may be addressed and sent to the Under Secretary, Energy Conservation, R. No.-6424, Hall No.-4, 6th Floor, GPOA-3, Africa Avenue, Netaji Nagar, New Delhi or may be e-mailed to saket-upsc@gov.in. The last date for receipt of suggestions and feedback is August 6, 2026. The draft norms shall also be uploaded to the websites of the Ministry of Power and the Bureau of Energy Efficiency shortly. The existing CAFE-II norms are likely to come to an end on 31st March 2027. The proposed norms for CAFE-III shall come into force on 1st April 2027 and shall remain in force for a period of five years. Compliance shall be assessed over two compliance blocks, comprising an initial block of three years, followed by a second block of two years. The fuel consumption targets are proposed to be progressively tightened, from 3.996 litres/100 km (94.76 gCO₂/km) in 2027-28 to 3.3273 litres/100 km (78.90 gCO₂/km) in 2031-32. The phased tightening of the targets will provide OEMs

with a clear and predictable regulatory pathway, enabling them to progressively develop and deploy more fuel-efficient vehicle models. Manufacturers shall be eligible to claim up to 9 gCO₂/km of compliance benefit for approved fuel-saving technologies, subject to a maximum benefit of 1 gCO₂/km per technology.

Volume derogation (super credits) shall be available for Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs), Range-Extended Electric Vehicles (REEVs), Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicles (PHEVs), Strong Hybrid Electric Vehicles (SHEVs), and Flex-Fuel Vehicles (FFVs) while calculating fleet average fuel consumption, thereby encouraging the adoption of cleaner vehicle technologies. A credit and debit mechanism is proposed, similar to the recently circulated draft amendment to CAFE -II norms. Manufacturers achieving performance better than their prescribed targets shall earn compliance credits, which may be carried forward within the prescribed compliance blocks. As per the ministry, manufacturers falling short of the prescribed targets may meet their obligations through carry-forward provisions, voluntary pooling arrangements with other manufacturers, or by purchasing compliance credits from the BEE. Compliance credits shall be denominated in units of 1 gCO₂/km. The initial buy-out price of credits from BEE is proposed to be Rs 2,500 per credit, with an annual escalation of Rs 500 per credit. Credits unutilized at the end of the compliance block shall stand lapsed. OEMs would be liable to a penalty under the provisions of the EC Act for non-compliance of these norms. Manufacturers with annual sales of less than 1,000 passenger vehicles shall continue to be exempt from the proposed norms, it added.

Special NIA court frames charges in narco-terror case

stand arrested," officials said. However, Sageer Ahmad Poswal, son of Nazir Ahmad Poswal of Amrohi Arna, Kupwara, was absconding. The Pakistan/PoJK-based accused who were absconding included Tariq Ahmad Malik alias Dilawar, son of Mohammad Ramzan, Alif-ud-Din Badana, son of Ghulam-ud-Din Badana of Amrohi, Karnah, Kupwara (presently in Pakistan), Mushtaq Ahmad Naik alias Usman Bhai, son of Ghulam Nabi Naik of Kundan, Khari, Ramban, (presently in Pakistan), and Firdous Ahmad Dar alias Umer Dar, son of Abdul Khaliq Dar of Harwan, Sopore, (presently in Pakistan).

However, another accused Mushtaq Ahmad Malik alias Rahee, son of Mohammad Yousuf Malik of Panzipora, Sopore, was killed in an encounter with security forces.

Jitendra announces first phase of ARC technologies
road construction and maintenance technologies developed by CSIR-CRRI through strategic collaborations with industry and implementing agencies.

Earlier, the CSIR-Central Road Research Institute (CSIR-CRRI) commenced its year-long Platinum Jubilee Celebrations with the launch of a nationwide first-phase implementation of advanced indigenous road infrastructure technologies across 16 towns or locations in the country, including Jammu. The celebrations were inaugurated by Jitendra Singh, who called for stronger collaboration between scientific institutions, industry and state governments to ensure that home-grown technologies were implemented on a much larger scale across the country. Before inaugurating the celebrations, he visited the technology exhibition and interacted with scientists, researchers and industry representatives.

The programme was attended by Dr N Kalaiselvi, Director General, CSIR & Secretary, DSIR; Ch Ravi Sekhar, Director, CSIR-CRRI; former Directors of the Institute; senior scientists, academicians, industry leaders, policymakers, engineers, representatives of Central and State Government organisations and technology partners.

UN hasn't been able to move needle on reforms: India

India said that the underlying reason for inadequacies of the Security Council is evident. "An 80-year-old architecture designed for the 1940s is ill-equipped to address contemporary challenges. As a collective, the UN has not been able to move the needle on reforming the Security Council," Parvathaneni said. Discussions so far have been limited to an endless cycle of prepared statements under the Inter-Governmental Negotiations (IGN) framework, with some action remaining largely on paper, he said. "This is untenable and must change." India noted that the Pact of The Future's action points on the IGN were not drafted by the co-facilitators of the Pact but by the then IGN Co-Chairs. "India had significant reservations with regard to these action points. However, it was India's constructive spirit that encouraged us to go along broadly with the Pact." "For India, making multilateralism fit for the future begins with ensuring that global institutions reflect contemporary realities. This underscores the urgent need for comprehensive reform of the Security Council, the revitalisation of the General Assembly, and the stronger role for ECOSOC in advancing sustainable development in its three dimensions - economic, social and environmental," Parvathaneni said.

Established in 1945, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is the central platform for fostering debate and innovative thinking, forging consensus on ways forward, and coordinating efforts to achieve internationally agreed goals.

Further, India said the international financial architecture too must also evolve to better serve the needs and priorities of developing countries. "Adequate, affordable and predictable financing remains indispensable for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. International financial institutions (IFIs) should become more representative, responsive and development-oriented, while preserving their mandates," he said.

India said it will continue to support all genuine efforts to implement reforms in global governance institutions, including the UN Security Council and the IFIs. "Our joint endeavor must be to make these institutions fit for purpose, equipped to handle the present and future challenges of humanity," Parvathaneni added.

Govt to bring bill raising SC strength to 38

qualifications for appointment as a Supreme Court judge, including experience as a High Court judge or advocate, or recognition as a distinguished jurist. An Indian citizen who has either served as a high court judge for at least five years, or as an advocate for 10 years, or is a distinguished jurist, can be appointed to the top court. The strength of the Supreme Court is increased based on the recommendations of the CJI, who writes to the Union law minister. After consulting the finance ministry, the Department of Justice under the law ministry moves the Cabinet with a draft bill.