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Zero tolerance against terrorism not merely statement for us: Def Min

perhaps did not have as much faith in India's capabilities as our government does," he said.

"Operation Sindoor was, in itself, a splendid example of technological warfare. In this operation, along with advanced missile systems like Akashteer, Akash missile system, and BrahMos, numerous latest equipment were also utilised," he added.

"It proved that India's armed forces not only understand change but are also employing it with confidence," the defence minister said.

"All of this is becoming possible because a new foundation has been laid over the past 12 years," he said.

In the year 2013-14, India's defence exports stood at just Rs 686 crore, but now it surged to over 38,000 cr in 2025-26, he said.

Goal is to position J&K as national hub for knowledge: LG

and book launches; it has become a means to generate new ideas, encourage dialogue and empower youth," he added.

He said in past editions, workshops, panel discussions and literary conversations had given new energy to Jammu & Kashmir's rich literary tradition.

"During this festival we have also witnessed an inspiring effort to revive our cultural heritage's priceless treasure, the Sharada script. We have seen the spirit of "Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat" take shape through initiatives such as Tamil-Kashmiri dialogues, and today, this festival has become a strong bridge linking regions, languages and generations," he said.

The LG also emphasised that the success of a book festival should not be measured by sales figures.

"I believe the true success of any book festival lies in the ideas and conversations it generates. If a discussion that begins at this festival reaches a college or university, then our goal is successful. If a dialogue held here and the ideas that emerged during the festival become the basis for future collaborations, then I will consider the festival and its objectives successful. If a young person finds a book at this festival that changes the course of their life, that will be the greatest achievement of the Chinar Book Festival," he said.

He urged youth to read at least one book beyond their textbooks every month, and he asked every young writer to resolve to write at least one page daily.

"Through the Chinar Book Festival we are ensuring that our children have roots to their identity as well as wings for future flight. I want to see this as a platform where local libraries and small-town book clubs also connect with the spirit of this festival, so that this celebration of knowledge reaches the public throughout the year and fosters exchanges among literary, musical and visual art forms, where words become voice, poetry takes color and stories become our shared experiences," he said.

He visited various book stalls and interacted with the exhibitors. He released several publications in different languages. He also asked organisers to plan a similar book festival in Jammu

Atal Dulloo, Chief Secretary; Prof Milind Sudhakar Marathe, Chairman, National Book Trust; Ram Niwas Sharma, Secretary, School and Higher Education; Yuvraj Malik, Director, National Book Trust; Amit Wanchoo, Chief Convener, Chinar Book Festival; Md Shams Eqbal, Director, National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language; eminent literary personalities, book lovers, youth and students in large number were present.

Prof Nazir Ahmad Ganai, Vice Chancellor of SKUAST Kashmir; Brij Mohan Sharma, Principal Secretary Culture; Akshay Labroo, Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar; G V Sundeeep Chakravarthy, SSP Srinagar; heads of various educational institutions and senior officials also attended the book festival.

Vaishno Devi yatra suspended

vised to cooperate with the authorities and avoid undertaking the pilgrimage until further orders.

Pilgrims were requested to remain updated through official communication channels for the latest information regarding the resumption of the yatra.

2 detained under PSA

maintenance of public order, a formal detention order under the PSA was issued.

Pursuant to the order, the accused was detained and lodged in district jail, Rajouri.

In the other case, police booked Bagh Hussain alias "Bagha", a resident of Marheen, Kathua, under PSA and lodged him in Baderwah jail.

A history sheeter habitual of indulging in criminal activities, Hussain was detained under PSA on the orders of the district magistrate, Kathua, after police prepared his dossier, officials said.

NC expels LAHDC Kargil CEC Akhoon

X handle, the NC said party general secretary Ali Mohammad Sagar had ordered Dr Akhoon's expulsion for six years, alleging that his actions violated party discipline and were detrimental to the organisation.

Saxena bans use, sale of chemical fertilisers in Ladakh

transforming Ladakh into a fully organic region, comes on the direction of Saxena. With this order coming into force, the procurement, distribution, sale, marketing and use of chemical/synthetic fertilisers would be strictly prohibited with immediate effect, across the Union Territory.

Any violation in this regard, would attract a minimum fine of Rs 10,000, according to officials.

"The administration of Union Territory of Ladakh imposes prohibition on the procurement, distribution, sale, marketing and use of chemical/synthetic fertilisers for agricultural practices in the Union territory of Ladakh, with immediate effect, with the objective to safeguard organic certification, protect soil and water resources, promote sustainable agricultural practices and to establish Ladakh as a model organic region, thereby, ensuring the long-term sustainability and resilience of its agricultural sector," the order said.

"Farmers and agriculture units have been advised to use only on-farm/off-farm organic inputs for agricultural practices in the Union territory of Ladakh," officials said.

"Ladakh has been blessed with a pristine environment, rich biodiversity, unique agro-ecological conditions and traditional farming practices that have remained largely free from excessive chemical intervention. The prohibition on chemical and synthetic fertilisers marks a transformative step towards making Ladakh a fully organic Union Territory. This initiative will protect our fragile Himalayan ecosystem, enhance the value of Ladakh's organic produce, improve farmers' incomes through premium markets and establish Ladakh as a global model of environmentally sustainable high-altitude agriculture," Saxena said.

India's first pvt orbital rocket Vikram-1 lifts off

seven-storey-tall, four-stage Vikram-1 rocket lifted off at 12.05 pm on Saturday from the first launch pad at the Satish

Dhawan Space Centre, here. Following a "planned hold," due to apparent navigation issues, the launch was revised 35 minutes late than the original prefixed time of 11.30 am.

After its initial journey of a little short of 16 minutes, Vikram-1 is expected to place the payloads, both domestic and foreign, into a Low Earth Orbit (LEO) at an altitude of 450 km with an inclination of 60 degrees.

Vikram-1, named after the legendary Vikram Sarabhai who is often regarded as the Father of India's space programme, is built with an all-carbon composite structure and powered by in-house developed propulsion systems, including 3D-printed engines and high-thrust solid-fuel rocket boosters.

The rocket is carrying payloads from Grahaa Space, Cosmoserve, DCubed, and Skyroot's own SCOPE, along with an artwork titled 'Cosmic Bloom'.

Birla approves merger of SS(UBT) with Shinde-led Shiv Sena

and constitutional experts of Parliament were carried out and they provided their inputs to the Speaker to help him take the final decisions, sources said.

The decisions came two days ahead of the monsoon session of Parliament, which will begin on July 20

Past precedents, decisions taken by the former speakers of Lok Sabha and chairmen of Rajya Sabha in similar situations were also examined before taking the "informed and legally sound" decisions, the sources said, adding Constitutional and legal aspects were looked into.

Besides the rebel groups of the TMC and Shiv Sena (UBT), the DMK also sought a separate seating arrangement, away from the Congress, after the principal opposition party broke its decades-old alliance with the Tamil Nadu party and joined hands with the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay's party TVK.

This demand was also likely to be accepted by the Speaker.

Altogether, 29 MPs got elected to the Lok Sabha on TMC tickets in the 2024 general election.

As many as 20 MPs broke away from the party and joined NCPI, a registered unrecognised political party headquartered in Howrah, West Bengal, and sought separate seating arrangement.

The rebel group also expressed their allegiance to the Narendra Modi government and their desire to join the ruling NDA.

One TMC MP passed away some time ago and the seat remains vacant.

In case of Shiv Sena (UBT), a total of nine MPs got elected on party tickets, of which six have joined the rival Shiv Sena, headed by Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

Both the TMC and Shiv Sena (UBT) argued before the Speaker that their rebel MPs should be disqualified as the defections fall under the anti-defection law.

The two parties argued that the anti-defection law may not be applicable only if two-thirds of the entire party walk away from its fold.

TMC general secretary and its Lok Sabha leader Abhishek Banerjee demanded before Birla that the rebels should be disqualified.

He also said the claims of the rebels that they 'merged' with the NCPI were not valid, and as per the law, two-thirds of the entire party must merge with another party, not just individual legislators.

Banerjee had also submitted before the Speaker 20 separate petitions against the 20 rebels seeking their disqualification.

Shiv Sena (UBT) had also met Birla and urged him to share the demands submitted to him by the six rebel MPs of the party who have now joined the Eknath Shinde-led party.

Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Anil Desai had said that they conveyed to the Speaker that the Tenth Schedule is clear: "Any group of a legislature party cannot merge into some other party on its own, even if they have a two-thirds majority".

On July 14, Sudip Bandyopadhyay and Kakoli Ghosh Dasidara, leaders of the rebel TMC, met the Speaker and discussed with him seating arrangements for the party's 20 MPs in the Lower House.

They also discussed the allotment of a party office in the new Parliament building, the sources said.

Heavy rain alert issued for J&K

few spells of rain and thundershower at most places. The Met department has warned of heavy rain, brief intense heavy showers and torrential rain at a few districts of J&K during this period.

"Heavy to very heavy rain is likely over Jammu, Kathua, Samba, Rajouri, Doda, Ramban and Kishtwar. Extremely heavy rain is also possible over Reasi and Udhampur of Jammu division towards late afternoon or evening and late night or morning hours," the official said.

From July 24 to 27, only brief spells of rain or thundershower were expected at a few places.

The MeT issued an advisory warning of possible flash-floods, landslides and mudslides at vulnerable places during the wet spell. A significant rise in water level in rivers and sub-basins is also likely, with chances of minor flooding and water logging in low-lying areas.

All concerned have been advised to plan accordingly and stay updated. Farmers were also advised to suspend all farm operations from July 19 to 23.

Fresh batch of 3,632 pilgrims leaves for valley base camps

Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, Anshul Garg said the decision had been taken as a precautionary measure to ensure the safety and well-being of pilgrims.

"In view of the forecast of inclement weather over the next few days and considering the safety and well-being of the pilgrims, the yatra shall remain temporarily suspended from both Pahalgam and Baltal routes with effect from July 19," he said.

Accordingly, no onward movement of pilgrims would be permitted from the Baltal and Nunwan/Chandanwari base camps from July 19.

Officials said updates regarding the resumption of the yatra would be issued after assessing route safety and weather conditions.

The yatra would also remain suspended from Bhagwati Nagar base camp here.

"No fresh batch of pilgrims shall be permitted to move from Jammu on July 19 towards Kashmir in view of inclement weather advisory. Pilgrims are advised to remain at their designated accommodation centres in Jammu," officials said.

The 57-day pilgrimage to the cave shrine was officially flagged off by LG Manoj Sinha on July 2 morning from Bhagwati Nagar base camp here simultaneously for the traditional 48-km Nunwan-Pahalgam route in Anantnag district and the shorter but steeper 14-km Baltal route 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.

US, Iran exchange strikes as they struggle over Hormuz

dozens of people and wounded hundreds in Iran. The US military also acknowledged that several more service members were injured.

Iran effectively closed the strait to shipping traffic after the war started Feb. 28. That sent the price of oil soaring and gave Iran significant leverage in negotiations. The price of oil rose Friday above \$86 a barrel, close to its highest level in a month, as crossings through the strait fell to a three-week low, according to an international shipping tracker.

In an address to the American public on Thursday evening, Trump insisted the war was going well. "We are likewise winning big in Iran, and you will see the fruits of that labor very, very shortly," he said.

Before the war began, the US had been in talks with Iran over its nuclear program. Trump now faces political pressure to bring the war to a close and avoid the kind of prolonged Middle East conflict he had campaigned against.

US airstrikes hit an electricity and desalination plant in Iran's southern Hormozgan province, Iranian state television reported. The attacks hit Bonji, a village on Iran's coast on the Strait of Hormuz.

Overnight strikes damaged two tunnels and a bridge, disrupting one of the main highways towards Bandar Abbas, a city which sits near the narrowest part of the Strait of Hormuz, according to Iran's state-run news agency. Iran also reported strikes on the strategic Qeshm Island inside the Strait.

The previous day, Iranian state media reported that the US hit highways and railway bridges, seemingly aimed at cutting off Bandar Abbas, Iran's main port, from roads leading into the Islamic Republic's central region onward to Tehran, the capital.

Iran acknowledged "attacks on power infrastructure" during the US airstrike campaign for the first time Friday when its Energy Ministry issued a call for people to use less power in southern provinces "experiencing extreme heat." The ministry did not specify what was hit.

Iranian authorities said at least 46 people have been killed and more than 400 wounded in recent US strikes, including eight killed in a strike on a bridge Friday.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps on Saturday stepped up its warning that countries hosting US forces should be "prepared to receive a corresponding response," according to Iran's State TV.

US officials acknowledged 13 additional US service members - 10 Army soldiers and three Navy sailors - had been injured since Monday, but offered no further details. Since the war began, 14 US service members have been killed and 427 wounded.

Iran has said the strait must be under its sole control and that vessels should pay fees to Tehran - even though the world for decades has considered it an international waterway.

Trump has returned in recent days to his threats to target Iranian power stations and bridges to try to compel Iran to loosen its hold on the strait, through which about a fifth of all oil and natural gas traded once passed in peacetime. The US also reimposed a naval blockade on Iranian ports to halt its shipments of crude oil.

Crossings through the strait fell to a three-week low of just eight vessels on Thursday, according to MarineTraffic.com.

A growing amount of the region's energy is being shipped through pipelines, but not nearly enough to offset the decline in shipping through the strait.

5 kg heroin seized near LoC, suspect held

tion, officials said.

According to officials, the heroin was meant to be transported further into the hinterland through an organised cross-border narcotics network.

One suspected smuggler was arrested in this connection, officials said, adding that investigations were underway to identify the intended recipients of the consignment, the cross-border handlers involved, and the local network that was to facilitate its transportation and distribution.

Further arrests and recoveries were likely, officials said.

Security agencies have repeatedly flagged attempts by Pakistan-based smugglers and handlers to push narcotics into Jammu and Kashmir using border routes, often in conjunction with terror networks to generate funds for anti-national activities.

UN human rights agency voices concern over 'wave of unrest' in PoK

process and fair trial must be fully guaranteed, Turk added.

Restrictions in the area on access to the internet are also concerning, as they disproportionately restrict the enjoyment of the right to freedom of expression, including freedom to seek, receive and impart information at a time when tensions are running high.

"We urge the authorities to ensure full internet access throughout the territory," the statement said, adding that Turk calls for meaningful and inclusive political dialogue to address the underlying issues and grievances of the local population.

Infra development essential for smooth functioning of distt courts: CJI

operation of district courts, not a luxury," he stated. Whenever new infrastructure is developed, it should not be viewed merely as an addition of a large facility; rather, infrastructure is the backbone of society, he added.

He pointed out that without infrastructure, basic amenities, and essential facilities, the very survival of a city can become a crisis. He acknowledged that the Indian population has increased over time along with the country's remarkable progress.

"There are three to four components of the progress - be it democratic values, the rule of law, and economic growth, in particular, which play a vital role. We can proudly say that since Independence, the country has achieved tremendous economic progress, and the city of Chandigarh stands as a shining example of that development," he said.

The CJI shared that from the outset of his tenure, he has advocated for the development of court complexes - both district courts and high courts - to be designed and structured similarly to hospitals. Every individual who comes to court seeking justice should find basic amenities, he asserted.

He pointed out the increasing number of bars at the sub-divisional level in Punjab and Haryana, indicating a rising demand for judicial officers.

"You may have noticed that even with annual recruitment, we are unable to fill all the posts. One major reason for that is, if we appoint judicial officers, do we have the judicial infrastructure available for them? If there are no courtrooms, what will be the use of appointing a judicial officer?" he asked.

He mentioned the notable increase in newly filed cases

over the past few years.

"Let me give you the example of the Supreme Court. In 2024, nearly 75,000 cases were filed there. In 2025, that number rose to around 80,000-83,000. This year, we feel that the number will cross one lakh. Keeping this in view, I requested the central government, which increased it (sanctioned strength of Supreme Court judges) from 34 to 38," he said.

Kant underscored the need to increase positions in the district judiciary, expedite recruitment processes, and improve judicial infrastructure to ensure the timely delivery of justice.

He acknowledged the prevailing narrative regarding a backlog of cases in the country and emphasised the need for an effective institutional response.

He clarified that he does not accept the claim that the pending cases amount to one crore.

According to him, when a case is filed, it is counted immediately, but it cannot be resolved on the same day due to procedural requirements and natural justice considerations.

Steps must be taken, such as issuing notices, completing pleadings, framing issues in civil suits, and allowing both parties to present evidence before a decision can be made, he said.

"As far as the procedural requirement is concerned, I do not count that case in arrears. There may be pendency, but pendency is for a good reason because the procedure provided in the law is being followed in that case," the CJI said.

Even with such considerations, he acknowledged that the courts are overburdened and that additional officers in district courts, along with a robust infrastructure, are essential.

Later, speaking to reporters, CJI Kant mentioned that artificial intelligence (AI) in the judiciary would be implemented through regulatory measures.

"You can visit the Supreme Court's website, where I have uploaded the AI regulations. You will understand how we are using AI, and how we will expand its use further. But in a regulatory manner," he said.

He asserted that the Indian judiciary is a leader in the use of technology, stating that it makes optimum use of technological advancements compared to judicial systems in other countries.

Kavinder calls upon graduates to harness technology for social good

them to remain determined in the face of challenges and to view success not as a destination but as the beginning of a new journey.

He said in the era of Artificial Intelligence, Digital India and Industry 4.0, technology must be driven by the larger objective of serving humanity. Referring to the AI-powered mental health support chatbot developed by JUIT students, he said it was an inspiring example of how innovation can address real societal needs.

The governor encouraged researchers and young innovators to develop technology-driven solutions for the unique challenges of hill states, including disaster management, sustainable agriculture and healthcare.

He also urged students to undertake scientific research on Himachal Pradesh's rich medicinal herbs and plants, stating that such innovations could generate entrepreneurial opportunities while benefiting local farmers.

Emphasizing sustainable development, Shri Gupta said every engineer and professional graduating from the University should place environmental responsibility at the centre of their work by promoting green technologies, conserving water resources and ensuring development in harmony with nature.

Congratulating the girl students receiving degrees and awards, the Governor noted that women are excelling in engineering and technology and making remarkable contributions across sectors. He expressed confidence that the University's women graduates would continue to bring laurels to Himachal Pradesh and the nation in science, technology and entrepreneurship.

The Governor observed that JUIT has made a significant contribution by producing highly skilled professionals who are serving India and the world. He urged the graduates to aspire to become job creators rather than job seekers, stating that entrepreneurship among the youth would play a transformative role in accelerating the economic growth of both Himachal Pradesh and the country.

Earlier, Vice-Chancellor Prof. R.K. Sharma welcomed the Governor and presented the University's Annual Progress Report, highlighting achievements in academics, research, innovation, entrepreneurship, international collaborations, placements, patents, research publications, the startup ecosystem, and national and global rankings. He also proposed the vote of thanks.

Deputy Commissioner Solan Manmohan Sharma, Superintendent of Police Sai Dattatreya, distinguished members of the University's Governing Council and Academic Council, faculty members, alumni, graduating students, their parents and other prominent people were also present on the occasion.

Shutdown in Doda, Ktwr over Baderwah firing death

Aarif Hussain, a resident of Cheeka village, was killed during a firing incident in Jai area of Baderwah. According to officials, he had tried to snatch a cop's rifle, following which the ambush party had opened fire, resulting in injuries to him and three SOG personnel.

Aarif had later died in the hospital.

Locals, however, rejected the official version and staged a massive protest in Baderwah during Aarif's funeral on Friday. They demanded a CBI probe and strict action against the 'guilty'.

Officials said two persons - Rehmatullah and Sajjad Ahmad - who were accompanying Aarif at the time of the incident and had fled the spot, were taken into custody from Tanda village of Baderwah late Friday for questioning.

Sinha reviews situation after yatra vehicle meets with mishap

JAMMU, JUL 17: LG Manoj Sinha reviewed the situation after a Shri Amarnathji Yatra convoy vehicle met with an accident near Jakhani in Udhampur earlier this morning.

He spoke with Udhampur DC Minga Sherpa and medical officials, and directed them to provide best possible medical care to the injured undergoing treatment at GMC&H, Udhampur.

"Spoke with the deputy commissioner of Udhampur and medical officials and enquired about the health condition of Shri Amarnathji Yatra pilgrims injured in the unfortunate road accident near Jakhani, Udhampur, earlier this morning.

Five pilgrims from Uttar Pradesh and a driver from Ganderbal sustained injuries and are currently undergoing treatment at GMC, Udhampur. Senior officials have been directed to ensure all necessary assistance and the best possible medical care is provided for their swift recovery. I pray to Baba Barfani for the safety, well-being and smooth journey of all the devotees," he said in a post on X.