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MEA responds, says credibility well-established globally

system. The US president made these remarks to drum up support for the SAVE America Act which would require Americans to show proof of citizenship to register to vote, impose a nationwide voter identification requirement and severely limit voting by mail.

"Earlier this month, India's Chief Election Commissioner, Gyanesh Kumar, asked our administration how can you have elections in the US without a valid Photo ID," Trump wrote.

Trump has been insisting on passing the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) America Act, claiming the move would curb electoral fraud.

However, both Democrats and Republicans are divided over the issue, and the US Senate adjourned for a five-week recess earlier this month without any concrete steps for its passing.

A fact-sheet on the SAVE America Act on the White House website also noted that India and Brazil have already linked voter identity cards to a biometric database, while the US relies on self-attestation by electors.

The bill also seeks to permanently ban men from competing in women's sports, and ban transgender mutilation surgery for children.

Every step will be taken to honour your sacrifices: LG tells veterans

posed several key initiatives including education and career incentives, psychological counsellors in identified areas, skill-development support and improved welfare infrastructure.

The board deliberated on key issues concerning veterans, veer naris, widows and dependents, covering welfare delivery, grievance redressal, healthcare and institutional strengthening. These include establishment of a ZSWO at Kishtwar and improved coordination on pension-related matters.

Among others, the meeting was attended by LG Pratik Sharma, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-in-C), Northern Command; Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo; Maj Gen Paramvir Singh Dagar, Chief of Staff, HQ White Knight Corps; Maj Gen KS Dhadwal, Chief of Staff HQ Chinar Corps; Shailendra Kumar, Additional Chief Secretary, Finance Department; Chanderkar Bharti, Principal Secretary, Home; Dr Mandeep K Bhandari, Principal Secretary to lieutenant governor; Neena Mishra, Principal Director, Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare, Government of India; BrigPankaj Chib (retd) Director of Sainik Welfare Department, J&K; Brig Sandeep Kaushal, Cdrof 21 Sub Area; Air Commodore VP Singh; Col Pradeep S Karki, Director, DRZ (North); BrigVirender Singh Salathia (retd) and other senior officials.

Govt forms Highway Safety Task Forces

would be the chairman of the district task force which would have six members, the order said.

PMGSY AE suspended

the Superintending Engineer, PW(R&B) Circle, Doda-Kishtwar, and would be entitled to subsistence allowance at 50 per cent of his pay and dearness allowance under the applicable service rules.

CB files chargesheet in visa fraud case

connection with a Portugal work visa. During preliminary verification, seven additional complainants with similar allegations came forward and were associated with the enquiry, officials said, adding that the probe established that the accused had defrauded the complainants, following which a formal case was registered.

During investigation, bank records, cheque details, travel documents, statements of complainants and witnesses, electronic evidence and forensic material were examined.

Financial transactions linked to the accused were scrutinised, while forensic examination corroborated questioned signatures with specimen signatures of the accused, officials said.

Digital FASTaglocal pass facility extended to 121 toll plazas

Urban Extension Road-II (UER-II) in Delhi.

The initiative is aimed at making national highway travel more seamless and citizen-centric by leveraging technology to enhance transparency and efficiency of the tolling operations.

Under the Digital Local Pass framework, those residing within 20 km radius of an eligible toll plaza can apply for the Local Pass through Rajmargyatra Mobile App.

National Highway users can check the list of eligible toll plazas by visiting https://rajmargyatra.nhai.gov.in/buy-fastag-local-pass.

The pass enables eligible commuters to undertake unlimited travel through the respective toll plaza during the month, as per applicable provisions.

Earlier, commuters seeking a local pass were required to visit the concerned toll plaza physically and submit documents to establish their residential address within the 20 km range and other eligibility requirements.

The Digital Local Pass facility leverages consent-based integration with government digital platforms, including DigiLocker and VAHAN, to retrieve and verify relevant in-

formation such as the commuter's residential address, vehicle details and linked FASTag.

Eligibility is further established through GIS-based verification, which determines whether the applicant's registered address falls within the prescribed 20 km radius of the eligible toll plaza.

SC directive on plea to confiscate properties of offenders

prayer seeking measures to ensure time-bound probe and trial in question paper leak cases as Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026, which tightens anti-paper leak laws, has been passed.

The Supreme Court fixed September 25 as the next date of hearing.

The plea, filed through advocate Ashwani Kumar Dubey, also sought directions to take steps for assessment of entire property of perpetrators and their family members, and accordingly invoke the appropriate provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act, Money Laundering Act, Benami Property Act and Black Money Act.

"Direct and declare that sentence in paper leak shall be consecutive, not concurrent, in order to prevent such incidents in future. Alternatively, direct the Law Commission to examine international practices and prepare a report on paper leak within three months," the plea said.

The plea submitted that repeated failures by authorities to prevent, investigate, and prosecute those responsible for paper leaks have led to serious violations of students' fundamental rights under Articles 14, 16, 19, and 21 of the Constitution.

It said despite the enactment of the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024, in June last year, the legislation suffers from several lacunas, including the absence of time-bound investigations and trials.

The plea highlighted the profound impact of paper leaks on students and their families, pointing to mental and physical trauma, loss of educational and employment opportunities, mounting financial burdens from unpaid loans, and a rise in cases of student suicides.

Roadmap to corner govt on student protests, Ram Temple 'theft' on agenda

sue will be discussed on August 19, when the CWC meets. "We cannot afford to relax, you know, because they (government) will try all sorts of tricks. But they do not have the numbers, and the gap between what they claim to have now and what they need is not a small gap. It is a substantial two-digit gap."

After the last CWC meeting in April, the Congress had accused the Modi government of playing politics in the name of the women'sreservation law and asserted that the proposed delimitation exercise linked to it is "not constitutional" and can have "grave consequences".

Omar reviews Film Festival preparations

be held from September 7 to 10 across Jammu and Srinagar.

The four-day festival is being envisioned as a premier international platform celebrating cinematic excellence, cultural exchange, creative collaboration and emerging filmmaking talent, while providing an opportunity to forge partnerships with film fraternity across different countries and showcasing the rich cultural and cinematic heritage of Jammu and Kashmir.

Information secretary R Alice Vazbriefed the chief minister on the festival, which includes screenings across categories such as International Competition, Cinema of the World, Bharat Panorama, J&K Select, Best Debut Film, Documentary/Hybrid and Short Films. The programme will also feature masterclasses, panel discussions, in-conversation sessions, round tables and workshops involving filmmakers, actors, critics, scholars and other prominent personalities from the film industry.

The meeting reviewed arrangements at the principal festival venues, including Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC), INOX Shivpora Srinagar and Waves Cinema Jammu, besides the proposed floating cinema at Lalit Ghat. Preparations for the Gulmarg excursion for a select group of filmmakers were also discussed, including visits to the Gondola, Golf Course, Gulmarg Club and other prominent attractions.

The chief minister emphasised the need for close inter-departmental coordination and timely completion of all arrangements to ensure a seamless experience for filmmakers, artists, delegates, guests and audiences.

He directed all concerned departments and agencies to remain fully geared up and ensure that every aspect of the festival is put in place well ahead of its commencement.

Omar called for prominently showcasing Jammu and Kashmir's rich heritage, cuisine, handicrafts, traditional art forms and iconic tourist destinations during the festival.

He stressed that meticulous planning and seamless coordination among all stakeholders would be essential to establish IFFJK as a premier annual event on the global film calendar.

The meeting also took stock of security and traffic arrangements, airport facilitation, hospitality and protocol, accommodation, transportation, medical facilities, power supply, sanitation, beautification, venue preparedness and other logistical requirements. Dedicated liaison and nodal officers are being put in place to facilitate coordination with the Information Department and visiting guests.

The Information Department was tasked with maintaining a consolidated action matrix covering departmental re-

sponsibilities, timelines, progress and pending issues, besides coordinating invitations, participant facilitation and media arrangements. Plans for extensive publicity and branding of IFFJK at regional and national levels through print, electronic, digital and outdoor media were also discussed.

The festival is expected to bring together filmmakers, artists, storytellers, industry leaders, policymakers, academicians, students and audiences from across the country and abroad, creating opportunities for dialogue, networking and collaboration through cinema.

Omar stressed that IFFJK should emerge as a flagship international event that showcases Jammu and Kashmir's cultural richness and creative potential to the wider world, while creating meaningful opportunities and a wider platform for local filmmakers and emerging talent.

The meeting was attended by Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, ACS Finance, ACS Tourism, Commissioner Secretary Information, Secretary Education, Secretary Culture, Secretary Transport, Secretary Hospitality & Protocol, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Inspector General of Police Kashmir Zone, IGP Security, Director Information, Heads of Departments of line departments, and senior officers of the concerned departments and agencies.

The officers briefed the Chief Minister on the status of preparations and the action being taken to ensure the successful conduct of the festival. The outstation officers participated in the meeting through video conferencing.

India calls for people-centric approach to environmental action

restoration, public participation and community ownership.

He also called for bringing traditional knowledge and modern science together to ensure solutions are "scientifically robust, locally relevant and socially inclusive".

The minister talked about how India's new Nationally Determined Contribution for 2031-2035 further reflects the ambitious commitment to advancing climate action while supporting inclusive development and energy security.

He outlined four priorities of India's BRICS Chairship: Promoting Sustainable Lifestyles; Afforestation, Forest Fire Management and Disaster Resilience; Circular Economy; and Adaptation.

He said "together, these four priorities reflect a simple yet powerful conviction - environmental action must remain people-centric and sustainable, implementation or action-oriented and responsive to the realities of developing countries".

Yadav said the progress achieved during India's Chairship reflects months of dialogue, negotiation and collaboration.

He called for building resilience without leaving communities behind, pursuing innovation with responsibility and placing sustainability at the centre of development.

He stressed that BRICS can "convert cooperation into collective and co-operative capability" through knowledge networks, technical exchanges, training, technology cooperation and stronger institutional partnerships.

The 12th BRICS Environment Ministers' Meeting concluded with the consensual adoption of the Joint Ministerial Statement (JMS) and the launch of four Knowledge Compendiums.

The Environment Ministers' Meeting also witnessed engaging panel discussions and side events.

During the event, the MoEFCC had set up a digital and interactive Mission LiFE Pavillion showcasing India's flagship initiative through immersive gaming and interactive technologies.

It offered a 360-degree experience of India's efforts to promote sustainable lifestyles. Further, to coincide the 2-day meetings, the delegates witnessed a culturally aesthetic and mesmerizing performance by Indian artists. The captivating performance offered a vivid and vibrant glimpse of Indian culture.

High Court denies default bail to accused

the trial court's February and March orders permitting 180 days to the NIA to conclude the investigation.

The court held that Wani was not legally entitled to default bail after 90 days as the permissible detention period under the anti-terror law UAPA was up to 180 days.

It said the purpose behind increased detention under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) was to provide longer period of detention for heinous offences such as terrorism.

Thus, the intention of the special law, i.e., UAPA, shall prevail over the general law, i.e., Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNNs), which makes an accused entitled to default bail in 90 days for offences punishable with death, life imprisonment, or more than 10 years of jail, the court held.

It also observed that Wani chose to challenge the extension of investigation period only after the second extension was granted and his application seeking default bail was dismissed.

He, therefore, lost the right to subsequently challenge the first extension and seek default bail on this basis, the court said.

It also reiterated that an accused was not entitled to copies of the report of the public prosecutor at the stage when the extension of time is being sought by the concerned

investigating agency.

Search operations launched in 3 distts

who were wearing shawls, moved towards Khuban. Prakash Chand then alerted security forces, officials said.

Responding quickly, joint teams of police and CRPF reached the village and initiated a search operation. While searches were in progress when reports last came in, forces were yet to find any trace of the suspects, the officials added.

Search operations were also underway in Sadini forests of Reasi and in several villages near the International Border in Hiranagarsub-sector of Kathua, officials said.

These operations were launched after inputs suggested the movement of suspects in these areas, the officials added.

Hormuz will stay closed until US lifts blockade: Iran

Trump threatened to bomb Oman if it "gets in the way" of a deal with Iran on Hormuz, and called for Tehran to surrender in a war that has become a growing political burden at home.

Ghalibaf during his speech, said Iran was "ready to inflict an even more crushing defeat on the enemy, proportionate to its actions and advances".

HR Council demands immediate internet restoration in PoJK

mittee to examine the circumstances surrounding the incident.

However, the Council alleged that even after more than a year, the findings of the committee had not been made public and there had been no clear disclosure regarding the measures taken to establish responsibility or prevent similar incidents in educational institutions.

The Human Rights Council called on the Education Department to make the investigative committee's report, key findings, relevant facts and actions taken so far publicly available, while ensuring that the privacy and dignity of the deceased student and their family are protected.

The Council further said that if the investigation remains incomplete, the Education Department should explain the reasons for the delay and provide a clear timeline for the release of the report.

According to the Council, the death of a student cannot be treated merely as an administrative matter, and it called for a transparent and impartial investigation into the circumstances surrounding the incident.

It further emphasised that ensuring accountability and providing a safe environment in educational institutions is a responsibility of the state.

AI, cybersecurity rapidly transforming governance: Jitendra

evolve rapidly.

Addressing participants of the 15-Day Refresher Course for Lateral Entry Joint Secretaries, Directors and Deputy Secretaries, he said that the rapidly changing administrative environment requires officers to remain curious learners and continuously update their knowledge and skills.

DrSingh said that the refresher course should be viewed as an opportunity for two-way communication and learning through dialogue, rather than merely a platform for delivering lectures.

He emphasised that participants, having acquired substantial professional experience and maturity, should actively engage in discussions and provide feedback on their learning requirements.

He highlighted the rapid pace of technological change, noting that developments in Artificial Intelligence, quantum technologies, cybersecurity and digital tools are increasingly influencing governance and administrative processes.

He stressed that continuous learning is essential for officers to effectively understand and respond to these emerging technologies.

Govt steps up efforts to reduce dependence on imports

companies, particularly micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

The items range from line replaceable units, sub-systems and sub-assemblies to spares, components and raw materials.

The latest list is part of the government's broader push under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative to expand domestic defence production and create opportunities for Indian manufacturers.

A key platform in this effort is the SRIJAN Defence Portal, launched by the DDP in August 2020 to connect DPSUs and service headquarters with Indian industry, including MSMEs and start-ups, for indigenous development and production.

According to the ministry, more than 33,000 defence items had been offered for indigenisation through the portal by DPSUs and service headquarters up to June 2026. This includes 5,012 items notified under the first five PILs.

More than 15,700 defence items have been successfully indigenised over the past five years, resulting in an estimated import-substitution value of about Rs 9,000 crore, the ministry said.

In addition, DPSUs placed procurement orders, including in-house production, worth approximately Rs 10,000 crore with domestic vendors up to March 2026.

The government said the sixth PIL would further expand opportunities for Indian industry, promote investment and innovation, strengthen the domestic defence manufacturing ecosystem and contribute to reducing dependence on imports.

DC Srinagar inaugurates ICT Labs in 5 Government Schools

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 18: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, on Tuesday inaugurated state-of-the-art ICT Labs established in five Government Schools across the District under a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative funded by NTT DATA and implemented by ELFA International, marking a significant step towards strengthening digital education and expanding equitable access to technology-enabled learning opportunities.

The inauguration ceremony was held at Government Girls Higher Secondary School (GGHSS), Nawakadal, where Deputy Com-

missioner Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest and inaugurated the ICT Labs established in five educational institutions including Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Nawakadal, Government Boys High School, Dara, Government Boys High School, Panzinar, Government Boys High School, Bakshipora and Government Girls High School, Balhama. The initiative, supported by NTT DATA and ELFA International, under its CSR programme was aimed to foster stronger collaboration among the Administration, Corporate sector and Community, thereby contributing to the overall welfare and development of the society.

Following the inauguration, the Deputy Commissioner interacted virtually with the faculty members and students of the other four beneficiary schools. He urged the students to make optimum use of the newly established ICT facilities and leverage digital resources to enhance their learning, skills and exposure to technology.

Addressing the gathering, the DC said that access to digital tools can significantly enhance student motivation, strengthen foundational competencies and broaden learning opportunities, particularly for students studying in schools located in remote areas of the district. He appreciated NTT DATA for supporting the initiative through its CSR programme and

ELFA International for effectively implementing the project, stating that such interventions demonstrate the positive impact that responsible corporate participation can have in strengthening public education infrastructure.

The DC remarked that the establishment of ICT Labs is not merely about introducing technology into classrooms, but about opening new horizons of opportunity for students who have long faced limited access to digital resources. He emphasized that technology-enabled education can help students acquire the confidence, skills and competencies needed to participate meaningfully in an increasingly digital world.

Underscoring the importance of

collaboration, the DC called for stronger public-private-community partnerships, stating that coordinated efforts by the administration, corporate sector and community can create equitable opportunities for students and contribute substantially to sustainable social development and the overall welfare of society.

He also urged ELFA International to continue undertaking similar CSR-led initiatives in District Srinagar, appreciating the organization's efforts towards strengthening the education ecosystem and complementing government initiatives through meaningful community-focused interventions.

The CEO & President, ELFA In-

ternational, while speaking on the occasion, stated that the ICT Lab initiative, supported by NTT DATA under its CSR programme, is aimed not only at providing infrastructure but also at creating an enabling environment where students can develop curiosity, confidence, digital awareness and practical capabilities.

Adding that ELFA International remains committed to working with corporate partners such as NTT DATA and the administration to implement initiatives that generate long-term social impact. He also assured that the organization would continue to undertake and support similar initiatives in the future to further strengthen digital education and expand tech-

nology-enabled learning opportunities for students across District Srinagar.

The event was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Mir Imtiaz-ul-Aziz, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Aadil Fareed Srinagar, IAS Probationer, Aakash Garg, Chief Planning Officer Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Personnel Officer DSEK, Iqbal Hussain Mir, Chief Education Officer, Ghulam Mohi-ud-din Bhat, Principal GGHSS School, Dr. Benazir Chalku, CEO & President ELFA International, Nawab Mehran Khan, Senior Vice President, Itfikhara Ahmad Mir along with senior team members of ELFA International besides, Students and Faculty members of the School.