

Pak miffed over US envoy calling J&K vital part of India

said earlier, this is a beautiful area. I think a lot of Americans would enjoy coming here and seeing the beauty and the opportunities that exist here," the US envoy added.

Gor called on the chief minister at his residence soon after reaching Srinagar.

"I am thrilled to be here. We just had a very good meeting and we have some follow-ups that we hope to take back to Washington (and) back to Delhi. But a very warm, a very cordial meeting and we look forward to building this relationship forward," he said.

Gor will visit Ladakh on Thursday.

Abdullah said he discussed with Gor the relations between New Delhi and Washington with a specific focus on Jammu and Kashmir.

"It was a very good meeting. We had an opportunity to discuss the relations between our two countries, but with a specific focus on what the US can do with Jammu and Kashmir," the chief minister said.

"There are obviously certain legacy issues that over time we will be working to resolve. But we look forward to taking this conversation further. This is a conversation that will take place both between Ambassador Gor and Washington, and between me and the Government of India in New Delhi," he said.

Abdullah said he was very hopeful and optimistic that the engagement between the United States and Jammu and Kashmir will "both widen and deepen in the years ahead".

Let us resolve to make SMVDU pilgrimage centre of knowledge: LG

ity, sensitivity, and responsibility towards society.

Reflecting on SMVDU's journey, the LG lauded its achievements in education and research. He noted that faculty members had secured around 140 research projects, including international collaborations, and established a state-of-the-art AI and Deep Learning Lab.

The university has received 14 patents, incubated 30 start-ups, and launched innovative programmes such as peer-learning. He urged the institution to strengthen industry-academia relations by organising open-house meetings to commercialise patents and innovations.

The LG stressed that the true measure of a university's success lies in its students and alumni, who carry forward its reputation through their contributions to society and the nation.

He encouraged SMVDU to leverage government initiatives such as the Rs 1 lakh crresearch fund announced by Prime MinisterNarendra Modi on August 15, 2026 and the PM Research Chairs scheme launched earlier this year, to ensure maximum participation in national innovation efforts.

"In the contemporary world, research and innovation becomes meaningful when it finds solutions to real problems, improves the quality of life in society and brings positive change to the lives of ordinary citizens through its contributions across different fields," he said.

On August 15, the PM made a historic announcement from the ramparts of Red Fort and allocated Rs1 lakh cr. He called upon the youth of the country to focus on research and innovation, saying that they should come forward with ambitious dreams. The Government of India had created a robust system of financial support, and that no young person would now face lack of resources.

"I would like the Vice-Chancellor to constitute a team comprising faculty members and selected students so that the maximum possible number of applications may be submitted from this University," Sinha said.

In his speech, he underscored that education is the most powerful investment for universities, society, and the nation. He cited foreign university's success in generating revenue through innovation and research as an example, urging Indian universities to aspire to similar heights by focusing on research, innovation, leadership, and entrepreneurship.

The LG identified key challenges facing Indian universities, including limited research, shortage of faculty, lack of accountability and weak industry linkages. He called for a change in mindset, urging institutions to ask not "What should we teach?" but "What problems must we solve?"

He emphasised that India's youthful population, creativity, and risk-taking ability are its greatest assets, and universities must transform students into creators of opportunities rather than mere job seekers.

Highlighting India's strengths, the LG pointed to the nation's ability to innovate at low cost, its cultural and linguistic diversity, and its vast diaspora. He urged SMVDU to connect these strengths with its research ecosystem and create solutions for real-world challenges in healthcare, rural economy, urbanisation, and digital innovation.

He also emphasised the importance of holistic education, calling for the promotion of sports, arts, literature, debates, and cultural activities alongside science and technology. He encouraged the University to engage with rural communities, promote sustainable development, and adopt best practices from global education models such as emphasis on fieldwork, industry partnerships, and a strong vocational training system.

Looking ahead, the Lieutenant Governor presented a comprehensive vision for SMVDU by 2040. He urged the University to become a leading global knowledge centre, establish advanced research facilities in AI, robotics, biotechnology, and climate science, and develop digital learning networks across rural Jammu &Kashmir. He also called for international student-exchange programmes to strengthen global collaboration.

He said the ultimate purpose of education is not limited to economic development but also the creation of creative human beings who understand themselves, respect nature, and recognise their responsibility towards humanity.

He urged SMVDU to harmonise modernity with human values and to resolve to become a pilgrimage centre of knowledge, a laboratory of innovation, and a beacon guiding society towards progress.

"On this Foundation Day, I urge all of you to move beyond established paths and work courageously on the important issues. As efforts are undertaken in this direction, we should ask ourselves: What do we possess that other countries do not? Our nation's greatest wealth and strength is the passion, ingenuity and daring spirit of our youth. We must remember, the light of education becomes complete only when it moves beyond the walls of the University and reaches the last person in society," the LG said.

He invited suggestions from various stakeholders for the establishment of the state-of-the-art International Museum of Goddess at Katra.

On the occasion, the LG also inaugurated the Self-Help Group's Bakery unit at SMVDU.

The event, among others, was attended by some SMVDSB members, LG's principal secretary Mandeep KBhandari, SMVDU VC (Prof) Pragati Kumar, IGP Bhim Sen Tuti, divisional commissioner Ramesh Kumar, SMVDSB CEO Sachin Kumar Vaishya, Udhampur-Reasi range DIG Shiv Kumar Sharma, Reasi DC Kumar Abhishek, members of the university's executive council, heads of various educational institutions, senior officials, faculty members, staff, and students of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University attended the foundation day celebrations.

Holy Mace of Machail Mata Yatra leaves for Paddar

started its spiritual journey towards Machailvillage this morning from Shree Gori Shankar Mandir in Kishtwar town.

The Holy Mace in Kishtwar yesterday evening for the annual Shree Machail Mataji Yatra.

The district administrationhas ensured all necessary arrangements for the smooth conduct of the yatra, including security, transportation, drinking water facilities, medical aid and other arrangements en route from Kishtwar to Machail.

Additional District Development Commissioner Vinod Kumar Behal and Additional Deputy Commissioner Pawan Kotwal, along with senior officers from the Civil and Police Administration and a large number of locals, warmly welcomed the Pavitra Charri in Kishtwar town, offering their reverence and seeking blessings.

Thereafter, the procession proceeded through the main market amid devotional fervour, where local devotees had darshan of the Pavitra Charri and sought blessings.

The Pavitra Charri was ceremoniously received at Shree Gori Shankar Mandir, Sarkoot, where it rested for the night. The procession resumed its journey towards Machail, Paddar, today amid adequate security arrangements.

The pilgrimage with the Holy Mace continues with unwavering devotion, following its traditional route and making scheduled halts at Atholi, Gulabgarh and Chashoti.

The Pavitra Charri will reach the sacred Shri Machail Ji Shrine on August 22, 2026 and will begin its return journey on August 24, 2026.

Searches continue in 3 distts

two suspected terrorists went to the house of one Prakash Chand in Takot village of Udhampur late August 17 night. When despite repeated knocks, the family didn't open the door, the suspects, who were wearing shawls, moved towards Khuban. Prakash Chand then alerted security forces, officials said.

Though a search operation was launched soon thereafter by security forces, the suspects remained untraced, officials said.

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.

Use social media to respond to people's concerns: Prez to IIS officers

In an increasingly complex information environment, she said, they will have to distinguish facts from misinformation.

"You should respond with responsibility during crises. In these times, when misinformation spreads very quickly, you should make sure that the citizens have access to the authentic information easily and on time," the president said.

Underscoring the importance of maintaining constant communication with the citizens, she said that at the same time, communication channels must be designed to enable meaningful two-way engagement.

In an environment where information travels instantly, let accuracy, credibility and public interest always guide the communication, she said.

"You should use latest technological tools with responsibility. You should ensure that innovation is pursued with due regard for ethical values, sound human judgement and accountability," Murmu said.

The President said, as India moves towards 2047, the IIS officers' role will become even more significant.

"A well-informed citizen is able to participate actively in development and democratic processes. I encourage you to communicate with empathy and sensitivity, keeping in mind India's rich diversity," she said.

She said their work will support evidence-based policymaking across diverse sectors of the economy and society.

"You should always remember that behind every dataset, there are the real people and their lives. You should make statistics more accessible to citizens, researchers and policymakers. Your contribution to building a modern, trusted and technology-enabled statistical ecosystem will be an important part of India's journey towards Viksit Bharat," the President said.

She said, reliable statistics are the foundation of sound governance.

"In today's data-driven world, the quality of public policy depends greatly on the availability of accurate, timely and credible data. The Indian Statistical Service plays an important role in generating, analysing and interpreting official statistics that form the basis of the decisions affecting the lives of millions of our citizens," she said.

The president said that the country's statistical system is undergoing significant transformation through digital technologies and innovative approaches to data collection and analysis.

The increasing use of machine learning and other emerging technologies offers new possibilities for producing more timely and detailed information, she said.

"At the same time, these developments place a greater responsibility on you to maintain statistical integrity, objectivity, confidentiality and professional excellence," President Murmu said.

The President said both the services (IIS and ISS) share a common purpose, which is to strengthen the quality of governance and serve the people of the country.

"Effective communication and credible information are essential pillars of a vibrant and responsive democracy," she said.

Murmu asked the officers to be judicious in their decisions, compassionate in conduct and unwavering in upholding integrity.

"The authority entrusted to you carries with it a profound responsibility to serve the people with fairness, humility and dedication. Your knowledge and skills will be valuable, but it is your character, commitment and sensitivity towards citizens that will ultimately define your contribution," the President added.

Saxena approves reservation for sportspersons

"Outstanding Sportspersons" in direct recruitment to Group 'C' (Non-Gazetted) posts under the administration of the Union Territory of Ladakh.

With this, Ladakh becomes the first and the only UT in the country to provide a fixed 4 pc reservation for sportspersons in government jobs. While other states/UTs do provide reservation/incentives under sports quota, they do not provide any statutory/specified reservation for the same, according to officials.

Pursuant to the approval, the administration has notified the Union Territory of Ladakh Outstanding Sportspersons (Horizontal Reservation in Direct Recruitment to Group 'C' non-gazetted Posts) Rules, 2026, providing a structured framework for extending the benefit of reservation to meritorious sportspersons, upon fulfilling all eligibility criteria including recruitment examination.

"Outstanding Sportspersons" includes those who have represented a State or the Country in recognised National or International competitions, medal winners in Senior or Junior National Championships, medal winners in Khelo India Youth Games above 18 years, Khelo India Winter Games, Khelo India Para Games and Khelo India University Games, as well as eligible sportspersons who have represented their universities in recognised Inter-University competitions. Eligible chess achievers have been included in accordance with the prescribed DoPT provisions.

The rules have been framed in pursuance of Clause 5.6 of the landmark Ladakh Sports Policy, 2026, approved by L-G Shri Saxena on August 1, with the aim to nurture sporting excellence through assured financial support and incentives.

The 4 pc reservation will apply horizontally across all vertical reservation categories. Horizontal reservation refers to the equal opportunity provided to all categories of beneficiaries such as women, SC/ST/ the transgender community, individuals with disabilities, etc., cutting through the vertical categories. This implies that a candidate selected against the

sports reservation will be adjusted against the vertical social category to which he or she belongs. The reservation will apply to direct recruitment to all Group 'C' posts under the Administration of UT Ladakh, except posts that may be specifically excluded by the Administration through notification.

The rules also ensure transparency and verification in the selection process. The Department of Youth Services and Sports will constitute a three-member committee to assist the recruiting agency or appointing authority in examining the genuineness, recognition status and validity of certificates, competitions and sporting achievements submitted by candidates.

The Sports Merit List will be based solely on sporting achievements. If a candidate has more than one sporting achievement, only the highest achievement will be taken into account, with no additional weightage for winning multiple medals or securing multiple positions.

Panel to review career progression of PM package employees

ment, the panel would review current service rules and cadre structures, evaluate the administrative and financial implications of potential reforms, and recommend necessary rule amendments to ensure smoother promotions, with a mandate to submit its final report to the government within one month.

The panel would also identify and suggest measures address the issues leading to stagnation or other impediments affecting the career progression of these employees

JKAS officer transferred

charge of the posts of Sub-Registrar, Khansahib, and Sub-Registrar, Budgam, in addition to hisown duties, till further orders.

3 killed as SUV falls into gorge

ing a curve.

Three members of a family were killed on the spot. They were identified as Prem Singh (50), his wife Turi Devi (45), and mother-in-law Durgi Devi (70).

Two other persons travelling in the vehicle managed to jump out before it fell into the gorge, and survived with minor injuries, officials said, adding the injured were admitted to a nearby hospital.

Police had taken cognizance of the incident.

Time for Congress to prepare roadmap for youth: Kharge

He alleged that educational institutions were increasingly being taken over by RSS people.

"Even after completing their education, when young people set out in search of jobs, they are confronted with paper leaks, recruitment exam scams, and delays in appointments. Children from poor and marginalised backgrounds suffer the most in this situation," he said.

"The anger that has arisen among the youth across the country is not a sudden or one-day phenomenon. This government has never had the time to listen to them; instead, it has consistently sought temporary measures to sidestep the issues. Consequently, they have been forced to take to the streets," Kharge said.

He said the Congress has incorporated the concerns of the youth into its agenda.

"In Parliament, too, we strove for a comprehensive deliberation on issues concerning education and examinations-seeking a discussion on the injustices faced by students and demanding accountability. However, (Prime Minister Narendra) Modi ji and (Home Minister) Amit Shah ji evaded questions throughout the Monsoon Session. Now that they have started speaking, they are prioritising non-issues over the questions raised by the youth," Kharge said.

"With the objective of preparing for the future, the time has come for the Congress to prepare a clear, comprehensive, and time-bound 'Education-to-Employment Roadmap' for the youth," Kharge said.

"Another crucial issue linked to the public's trust concerns the Ram Mandir. The issue of the massive scam surrounding the Ram Mandir is resonating among the masses," he said.

The prime minister had announced the formation of the trust for the Ram temple's construction in Parliament, he pointed out.

"Presumably, he appointed his own people to the trust after careful consideration. Ordinary people generously donated funds, gold, and silver, believing that since the prime minister had constituted the trust, it would operate with integrity. Yet, a massive scam has come to light. People are asking questions, but Modi ji remains consistently silent," Kharge said.

"The nation wants to know: how much in the way of offerings-gold, silver, and other valuables--was received there? What is the accounting for it? This matter will not be resolved merely by sending a few low-level individuals to jail," he said.

The more the BJP attempts to divert attention from this issue, the deeper the public's suspicion will grow, Kharge said.

"On this occasion, I would particularly like to remember Rajiv Gandhi ji; his birth anniversary falls tomorrow. Even while leading a government with a massive majority, he placed the youth at the very centre of his policies," he said.

It is the result of the Congress party's extensive efforts since independence that the country gained access to affordable and accessible education, thereby opening the path to socioeconomic development for the poor and marginalised sections of society, he said.

The Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting was held at Indira Bhawan, with Kharge chairing it and top leaders, including former party chiefs Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, AICC general secretaries Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Jairam Ramesh and K C Venugopal, senior leaders Ambika Sonia, Mukul Wasnik and P Chidambaram, among others, in attendance.

The meeting was also attended by Congress chief ministers A Revanth Reddy (Telangana), V D Satheesan (Kerala), Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu (Himachal Pradesh), and D K Shivakumar (Karnataka).

Govt's Gen Z outreach: 1 minister to visit 1 university every day

there are as many as 1,300 universities in the country, including 57 central universities and 522 state universities, while others are either deemed-to-be or private universities. The police crackdown on protesting students here on July 20 had led to a massive backlash, with the Opposition disrupting proceedings during the Monsoon session of Parliament.

Amidst the student protests, Dharmendra Pradhan had to resign as education minister on July 25.

Prime Minister Modi himself reached out to the students through social media on multiple occasions.

In his Independence Day address also, Prime Minister Modi announced a slew of youth-centric initiatives, including free online coaching, an AI skilling programme, a sports talent hunt and widening of the civil defence network, while listing out opportunities for them in areas ranging from manufacturing, space and nuclear to semiconductors.

J&K Bank reviews Mission YUVA progress, felicitates top performers

Cluster Heads of Srinagar, Kulgam and Anantnag-II, besides officials from various branches across the Kashmir Division.

The review focused on strengthening field-level coordination, expediting the processing of eligible cases and ensuring continued support and handholding to beneficiaries. Notable performers from across the Kashmir Division were also

felicitated for their outstanding contribution towards the implementation of Mission YUVA.

Appreciating J&K Bank's contribution as the principal financial partner of Mission YUVA, Mission Director Harvinder Singh acknowledged the coordinated efforts of the bank's divisional, zonal, cluster and branch-level teams in achieving significant milestones under the programme.

"Mission YUVA seeks to translate the aspirations of our youth into sustainable enterprises and meaningful livelihoods. As its principal financial partner, J&K Bank has played a vital role in taking the programme to the grassroots through timely financial support, sustained handholding and close coordination with the implementing agencies," Singh said.

He added that the commitment demonstrated by the bank's field teams would help Mission YUVA continue generating enduring employment opportunities across Jammu and Kashmir.

Speaking on the occasion, Arshad Qadri thanked the Mission Director for chairing the meeting and guiding the Bank's functionaries.

"For J&K Bank, Mission YUVA is not merely a financing programme but an opportunity to nurture a new generation of confident and capable entrepreneurs. Our teams across Kashmir remain fully committed to supporting eligible youth from identification and appraisal to disbursement and post-finance handholding, so that their ideas are transformed into sustainable ventures," Qadri said.

He said the recognition accorded to the achievers would further motivate the Bank's teams to deepen outreach, improve conversions and contribute meaningfully towards the employment and entrepreneurial objectives of Mission YUVA.

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks presented by the Zonal Head, Srinagar.

RDI fund disbursal planned shortly: Jitendra

nouncements.

He said the RDI Fund 'Conflict of Interest' policy was protected by stringent safeguards to ensure protection of Taxpayers' Money as well as private capital. However, he added that suggestions from stakeholders are most welcome and wherever feasible more safeguard could be considered.

During the meeting, Dr Singh announced that the next round of RDI Fund disbursal was planned shortly.

The meeting was also informed that over 20 more Second Level Fund Managers are being appointed shortly, possibly within a month or so.

Dr Singh reviewed the progress of the Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) Fund during a review meeting with Science Secretaries and directed that the disbursal process for the selected firms be expedited and timelines reduced to the minimum possible.

Officials informed him that the proposals of the selected firms have already undergone the required evaluation process and that the next stage of disbursal is expected to be completed within about two weeks or so.

India-Japan to discuss maritime security cooperation

views on deeper maritime security cooperation and closer defence equipment and technology collaboration under the 'Make-in-India' framework, following Japan's revision of the Three Principles on Transfer of Defence Equipment and Technology.

The meeting provides an opportunity to build a roadmap for further advancing bilateral defence and security cooperation.

As per the release, Japanese Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi, who is on his maiden visit to India, visited the Western Naval Command in Mumbai on Wednesday, where he held discussions with the Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Krishna Swaminathan and Flag Officer Commanding in Chief, Western Naval Command Vice Admiral Sanjay Vatsan. The delegation was briefed on the roles and responsibilities and operational capabilities of the Indian Navy.

Upon his arrival, the visiting dignitary inspected a Guard of Honour at the Western Naval Command. He, earlier, laid a wreath at the Gaurav Stambh at the Naval Dockyard. He also paid a visit to the indigenous ship INS Chennai, the Ministry of Defence said.

India and Japan share a common vision of building a free, open, resilient and prosperous Indo-Pacific region.

The release underlined how the two-day visit of the Japanese Defence Minister underscores the growing momentum in bilateral defence cooperation and reflects the commitment of both sides to further expand the partnership.

Notably, the visit comes weeks after Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi was in Delhi for the Annual Summit with Prime Minister Narendra Modi where both sides agreed to deepen defence and security cooperation.

US sanctions 'flagrant attack' on court independence: ICC

court.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio earlier said in a statement, without providing examples, that the sanctioned "individuals have directly engaged in efforts by the ICC to investigate, arrest, detain, or prosecute officials whose government has not consented to ICC jurisdiction".

The ICC replied in a statement on Tuesday, saying "When judicial actors are threatened for applying the law, it is the international legal order itself that is placed at risk."

Established in 2002, the ICC prosecutes individuals accused of the gravest atrocities and acts as a last resort when countries do not have adequate legal systems to ensure accountability.

Donald Trump's administration has already imposed sanctions against officials of the ICC, which issued in 2024 an arrest warrant for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over the war in Gaza.

The measures bar them from entering the US and from carrying out transactions in the US financial system.

In an X post Tuesday evening, Netanyahu applauded the US sanctions and called the ICC "a kangaroo court that cloaks its abuse of power in the language of international law".

The Netherlands, where the court is based at the Hague, "disapproves of the latest sanctions against officials and staff of the ICC," Dutch Foreign Minister Tom Berendsen wrote in an X post. "International courts and tribunals must be able to freely carry out their mandates," he added.

Last month, Washington launched a major diplomatic offensive against the ICC, accusing it of "threatening" Americans and calling on partners to withdraw from the body -- a move already announced by Chad and Venezuela, which has aligned with the United States since the capture and ouster of leader Nicolas Maduro.

The ICC expressed concern over those withdrawals, asserting that such countries risked undermining the collective pursuit of justice. The US signed the Rome Statute establishing the ICC but never ratified the treaty. Israel, Russia and China are not ICC members either.

"The Trump Administration has been clear: the International Criminal Court is a corrupt and fatally politicised supranational court that has maliciously abused its authority and exceeded its mandate. We will not tolerate its assault on state sovereignty," Rubio's statement said.

Last week, four human rights groups sued Trump in a New York court over his sanctions targeting the ICC, saying the measures block victims of war crimes from pursuing justice.

One of the plaintiff groups, Human Rights Watch, decried the new sanctions in a statement on Tuesday.

The sanctions are "just the latest example of the Trump administration's utter contempt for international law and a naked attempt to shield American and Israeli officials implicated in serious crimes from justice," the rights group's Middle East and North Africa director Balkees Jarrah said in a statement.