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Tanks 'iron wall' on borders, boost soldiers' morale: Rajnath

"The character of warfare has changed, but that does not mean tanks have lost their relevance. Drones and missiles are important, but tanks continue to have a role. What is needed is not reliance on a single platform, but a combined capability," Singh said.

Every weapon system has its own strengths, he said. "The strength of a tank lies in its mobility and firepower. The need today is not to eliminate tanks, but to modernise them. This is not a battle of one weapon against another; it is a battle involving the entire combat system," Singh said. While technology and the character of warfare were evolving, tanks continued to remain relevant and necessary in ground warfare, he added.

VFJ, where the tank overhaul facility is coming up, is a premier military vehicle manufacturing unit operating under Armoured Vehicles Nigam Limited (AVNL).

Established in 1969, the factory initially produced Shaktiman 3 tonnes (T) vehicles in collaboration with Germany's MAN, as well as Nissan 1T and Jonga vehicles in collaboration with Japan's Nissan Motors Co.

The factory complex is spread over 330 acres, while its adjoining estate covers another 600 acres, officials said.

Death toll rises to 162; thousands remain missing

that the flood in the Trishuli River was caused by an ice avalanche upstream blocking the Lendhe River. The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRA) said that a debris-laden flood occurred in the Lendhe River following an ice-rock landslide at the Nepal-China border, about 20 kilometres northeast of Rasuwagadhi.

"The same flood appears to have entered the Trishuli River after passing through Timure," the authority said, amid various theories and assessments regarding the cause of the flood, which has now become a recurring issue.

Disaster expert Basanta Raj Adhikari also argues that an ice avalanche occurred in the Lendhe River, about 20 kilometres upstream of Rasuwagadhi, blocking the river and causing the flooding.

Over 300 Indians and 37 NRIs were among the nearly 500 persons missing, officials said. At least 50 of the Indians were pilgrims for the Kailash Manasarovar Yatra.

After the flash flood, 81 security forces have remained out of contact. Forty-four Army personnel, 28 Nepal Police personnel and 9 Armed Police Force people deployed in Rasuwagadhi, Syafrubesi and Betrawati among other places have lost contact with the centre.

Meanwhile, the flood and landslides have obstructed various road sections, including a national highway in nine districts, according to a statement issued by Nepal Police.

In some places, the collection of mud and rocks has blocked the road, while in other places transportation has been halted due to possible risks associated with the flood.

A section of the national highway from Nagdhunga in Kathmandu to Mugling has been completely halted for an indefinite period.

This is the main highway connecting Kathmandu with outside districts. Similarly, transport service has been halted on the Mechi Highway of Ilam district, the BP Highway of Kavre, the Kanti Lokpath of Makwanpur, the national highway of Rasuwa, the national highway of Nuwakot, the Prithvi Highway of Dhading, national highway connecting Chitwan and Jajarkot Dolpa road section in Rukum West.

The flash floods have destroyed nine hydropower projects and an equal number of branches of commercial banks. A preliminary report shows 19 motorable bridges and 40 kilometres of highway have been swept away in the flood, with no accounts of the private and public properties so far, reports said.

Based on the scale of those unaccounted for, security officials and disaster experts say Wednesday's flood may rank among the deadliest in Nepal's modern history-potentially surpassing every disaster since the 1993 floods in Sarlahi, Rautahat and Makawanpur, which killed 1,400 people and have long stood as the country's benchmark disaster, it added.

Foreign Minister Shisir Khanal said nearly 300 Indian tourists were among thousands who were reportedly missing.

He also confirmed that 160 people had died and thousands remain untraced after the tragedy in the Rasuwa region.

"Thousands of families have lost homes and are missing as of now. We are still trying to ascertain the full extent of the disaster," Khanal said.

Nepal Police on Thursday said that the death toll rose to 162 in the flash flood on the Bhotekoshi River that wreaked havoc across three districts on Wednesday.

On Wednesday, the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu issued emergency numbers for assistance and information related to Indian nationals affected by the flash floods. In a post on X, it said people can contact +977 985 131 6807 or +977 970 910 7500.

In Beijing, the Embassy of India also issued a helpline number, 0086 185 1428 4905, which can be contacted via WhatsApp.

LG, CM greet people on Raksha Bandhan

unconditional love, affection, and trust. May the auspicious occasion further strengthen societal ties, and deepen the spirit of unity &togetherness across all sections," he added.

In his message, the chief minister described Raksha Bandhan as a cherished festival that celebrates the bond of love, affection and mutual respect between brothers and sisters.

"The festival reflects the enduring values of family bonds, trust, care and responsibility that strengthen the social fabric of society," he said and expressed hope that the occasion would bring happiness, peace and prosperity to every household and further strengthen the spirit of unity, harmony and brotherhood among people across Jammu and Kashmir.

3 cattle-loaded trucks seized, smugglers flee

dents, police intercepted two trucks at Hatli Morh and Sawan Chak. Giving details, officials said at Hatli Morh, the driver stopped the vehicle a few mts before the naka point and fled.

Seventeen cattle were found loaded in the truck and rescued. The vehicle was seized.

At Sawan Chak also, the truck driver fled after stopping the vehicle a few mts away from the naka point.

Fifteen cattle were found loaded in the truck and rescued, while the vehicle was seized, officials said.

Cases in this regard were registered at the concerned police stations.

Saxena approves VAT reduction on natural gas

on natural gas in Ladakh from the existing 21 pc to 5 pc. This VAT reduction CNGand PNGwould boost the government's larger plan of implementing CGDnetwork that envisages providing piped household gas connections across the UT of Ladakh.

This would make PNG and CNG more affordable for consumers, encourage wider adoption of cleaner fuels and contribute to Ladakh's long-term clean-energy and sustainable development goals, as envisaged by Prime MinisterNarendra Modi.

The decision follows a communication dated 22 June 2026, from the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB), under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, urging the UT Administration for a concessional fiscal framework for natural gas in Ladakh, so as to make the city gas distribution system more affordable. The PNGRB cited the difficult terrain, dispersed population centres, extreme climatic conditions and the high cost of transporting energy over long distances in Ladakh as critical factors that could adversely affect the economics of CGD development in Ladakh as compared to other parts of the country.

Considering the urgency and the larger benefits, Saxena, acting swiftly on the communication from the Centre, approved the proposal for reducing the VAT from the existing 21 pc to 5 pc. This has brought the UT of Ladakh at par with states like Gujarat, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh that levy 5 pc VAT on natural gas. Notably, Natural gas remains outside the GST framework and is subject to the VAT regime of the respective States and Union Territories.

"Our objective is to make essential energy more affordable to the people of Ladakh while creating an enabling environment for investment and infrastructure development. The reduction of VAT on natural gas will support the expansion of PNG and CNG services, strengthen the clean-energy ecosystem and improve the quality of life of our people. These measures reflect the UT Administration's commitment to building a more connected, competitive, clean and sustainable Ladakh," the LG said.

The PNGRB has authorised Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) to develop the City Gas Distribution infrastructure in Ladakh. Subsequently, PNGRB had recommended bringing PNG and CNG under a concessional VAT framework at 5 pc or lower, noting that affordability would be critical for consumer adoption and demand creation during the initial years of CGD development in Ladakh.

The Ladakh administration had also reduced VAT on Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) for civilian aircraft from 26.25 pc to 1 pc, in order to make air travel to Ladakh more competitive and make Ladakh a refuelling hub. The measure was undertaken in the context of the national policy push led by the Hon'ble Prime Minister for promoting regional air connectivity under the UDAN scheme. The 1 pc rate for civilian aviation fuel is lower than the rates prevailing in several States, including Delhi and Maharashtra.

Govt trying to change "sarkari naukri" mindset: Jitendra

means of livelihood. "PM Narendra Modi said "StartUp India Stand up India" from the ramparts of Red Fort, launched StartUp policy when the concept hardly existed and today India ranks third globally with over 2,30,000 registered StartUps," he said.

"During the past12 years, several youth-centric schemes like MUDRA Yojana, SVANidhi Yojana and Vishwakarma Yojana have been started to help youth earn livelihood without depending on anyone," he said while addressing the National Sports Day 2026 celebrations, 'Khelo India Samvad - Khel Ki Baat PM Ke Saath' organised at the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu, bringing together young participants for a dialogue on youth leadership, fitness and nation-building.

He highlighted the transformative changes witnessed by India over the past decade, particularly in opportunities created for the country's youth. He said, today, India's youth were making a mark globally.

He underscored the importance of harmonious development in the student age in shaping a healthy, disciplined and confident generation of young Indians.

Fin Min meets top bosses of Canadian financial firms

long-term investment, the finance ministry said in a post on X.

She also highlighted opportunities for Sun Life to deepen its presence in insurance, asset management, alternatives and infrastructure, including through GIFT IFSC, and greater participation by Canadian institutional investors in India's growth story.

Sun Life is present in India in insurance and fund management space, besides having other operations.

In another meeting, Canaccord Genuity Vice Chair Rod Phillips and CEO Dan Daviau highlighted the potential for greater investment flows between Canada and India.

She encouraged Canaccord Genuity to explore opportunities across India's growth sectors and play a constructive role in connecting Canadian and global capital with Indian businesses.

Discussions covered opportunities to deepen Canaccord Genuity's engagement with India, including supporting Indian companies in accessing global capital, expanding internationally and acquiring technology and businesses overseas, the ministry said in a separate post on X.

During the meeting with Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB) President and CEO John Graham and Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan (OTPP) President and CEO Jo Taylor, Sitharaman encouraged them to further deepen their engagement with India's infrastructure sector and emerging growth opportunities.

She appreciated CPPIB and OTPP's continued confidence in India and their long-term commitment, including investment in NIIF Infra Fund II.

Discussions focused on expanding opportunities for institutional capital across transmission, renewable energy, roads, ports, urban infrastructure, digital infrastructure and data centres, the ministry said in another post on X.

The finance minister also highlighted India's growing infrastructure monetisation pipeline and ongoing efforts to strengthen investor protection, regulatory predictability and transparency, as well as new opportunities in private credit and international financial services through GIFT IFSC.

Discussions focused on opportunities across transportation, transmission, renewable energy, urban infrastructure, logistics and real estate, leveraging India's strong growth, expanding middle class and infrastructure needs, it added.

Kharge urges PM to freeze LS strength at 543

the existing state-wise allocation of Lok Sabha seats for 25 years and the implementation of one-third reservation for women from the 2029 Lok Sabha elections.

Kharge urged the government to share its delimitation proposals with all political parties and give them and state governments sufficient time to study the proposals before introducing them in Parliament.

The Congress president said he had made a similar request to Modi on July 16, seeking an all-party meeting on the issue and adequate time for political parties to examine the government's proposals.

Kharge reiterated the request after Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister said in a television interview that a special session of Parliament could be convened to discuss delimitation-related proposals.

"This perhaps explains the continued delay in the prorogation of the Monsoon session," Kharge said.

LoP in the Rajya Sabha and Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge speaks in the Upper House during the second part of the Budget session of Parliament, in New Delhi, Wednesday, April 1, 2026.

He said the Congress's position was clear: the Lok Sabha's existing strength of 543 seats should be maintained for another 25 years, the current state-wise allocation of seats should remain unchanged for the same period, and one-third reservation for women should be introduced from the

2029 Lok Sabha elections.

"Before you go ahead as indicated by the Union Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, I wish to reiterate my earlier request to you to convene an all-party meeting to discuss whatever delimitation proposals you have in mind; give all political parties and state governments adequate time to study such proposals," Kharge said.

Calling delimitation an issue of "enormous significance" for the country, Kharge urged Modi not to "bulldoze" the proposals as he alleged the government had attempted on April 16 and 17, 2026.

The Congress has previously demanded that the existing strength of the Lok Sabha be frozen and that 33% reservation for women be implemented.

Earlier this month, the Congress Working Committee reiterated its support for both demands.

The opposition party had also criticised Modi's appeal to political parties to support a delimitation-linked bill for implementing women's reservation, calling it "drama" and alleging that the government's focus was "Modi preservation, not women's reservation".

During the Budget session on April 17, a Constitution amendment bill linked to delimitation and the implementation of women's reservation in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies was defeated in the Lower House.

Of the 528 MPs who voted, 298 supported the bill and 230 opposed it. The bill required a two-thirds majority, or 352 votes, to pass.

Cong alleges Rs 36,000-cr sugar scam, says govt aided hoarders

farmers were producing less sugarcane because of unremunerative prices and alleged that the government's claims of agricultural development had failed on the ground.

He further claimed that 32% of sugarcane stocks were used to produce E20 fuel between November 2025 and July 2026, reducing the quantity of sugar available for consumers.

"The Modi government gets the praise for E20 fuel and people bear the consequences," he said.

Surjewala demanded that the government restore the previous Congress-led scheme under which 500 grams of sugar was provided to every family member at subsidised rates through the Public Distribution System.

He said consumers would again feel the impact of inflation when they celebrate Dussehra and Diwali this year.

Internationally acclaimed cyclist calls on Kavinder

human endurance, discipline and purpose, observing that his mission reflects the spirit of Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat.

He noted that such initiatives strengthen the values of unity, discipline and service to the nation, and encourage the youth to engage more deeply with sport and environmental responsibility.

In recognition of Debnath's remarkable contribution, the governor announced a sum of Rs 51,000 from Lok Bhavan to encourage the successful completion of his mission.

The governor extended his heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to Debnath, expressing hope that his journey would continue to inspire the youth of the country.

Debnath expressed his gratitude to the governor for his encouragement and support.

Iftikhar Gillani nominated as PoJK 'PM'

tive assembly on a technocrat seat, has been finalised for the post on Nawaz Sharif's recommendation, a senior Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader said.

There are 53 seats in the PoJK legislative assembly, 45 are directly elected, while eight are reserved for women, technocrats and clerics.

Gillani was defeated by Pakistan People's Party candidate Sardar Mukhtar Ahmed Khan Abbasi in a Muzafarabad constituency.

"Despite losing on a direct seat, Gillani was awarded a reserved seat for technocrats and professionals on the recommendation of Nawaz Sharif," the PML-N leader said.

He added that three-time prime minister took the decision in consultation with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the PML-N's regional president Shah Ghulam Qadir, the region's former prime minister Raja Farooq Haider and others.

Nawaz Sharif and his daughter, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, had campaigned for Gillani during elections to garner support for him.

The assembly will elect the new prime minister without its full strength of 53. Elections to seven of the 45 directly elected seats - five in Poonch district and two in Sudhnoti district - could not be held due to what authorities described as a law-and-order situation.

A large number of people under the banner of the Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) have been holding protests in PoJK since early June, in which several protesters and security officials were killed. The regional government banned the group in June.

A couple of days ago, newly elected members of the legislative assembly took the oath of office. Subsequently, Chaudhary Tariq Farooq of the PML-N was elected as the Speaker, while his party colleague Muhammad Ahmed Raza Qadri was elected Deputy Speaker.

India maintains that the entire Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh are integral and inalienable parts of it. New Delhi also asserts that Pakistan has been in "illegal and forcible occupation" of parts of these Union Territories.

14 IPS, JKPS officers transferred; Tejinder posted IGP Jammu

Sujit Kumar, IG Security, J&K,is transferred and posted as IG, Kashmir Zone, against an available vacancy.

Vivek Gupta, IGP Railways, J&K,is transferred and posted as IGP Security, J&K, vice Sujit Kumar.

Shakti Kumar Pathakhas been designated as Director, Anti-Corruption Bureau.

Mubassir Latifi Ameer, DIG (Personnel), PHQ, holding additional charge of DIG Training, PHQ, is transferred and posted as DIG IR, Kashmir, against an available vacancy. Sahil Sarangal, SSP, Handwara,is transferred and posted as SSP, Pulwama, against an available vacancy.

Sunny Gupta, additional SP, Anantnag,is transferred and posted as SSP, Kishtwar, vice Naresh Singh.

Tahir Saleem Khan, SO to IG, Kashmir Zone,is transferred and posted as SSP, Handwara, vice Sahil Sarangal.

Muzaffar Ahmad Shah, SSP SCW, Kashmir,is transferred and posted as SO to IG, Kashmir Zone, vice Tahir Saleem Khan.

Naresh Singh, SSP, Kishtwar,is transferred and posted as SSP, Rajouri, against an available vacancy.

SC to hear plea on cash donations to political parties

mines the purity of the election process as it deprives voters of the crucial knowledge about the source of political funding, including the donors and their motives, preventing them from making a rational, intelligent and fully informed decision while casting their vote.

The petition, filed by Khem Singh Bhati, also sought a direction to the poll panel to prescribe as a condition for registration of a political party and allotment of the election symbol that no amount can be received in cash by any political party.

The plea sought the striking down of Clause (d) of Section 13A of the Income Tax Act, 1961, as unconstitutional and also referred to the apex court's 2024 judgement which

scrapped the electoral bonds scheme.

Section 13A of the Act deals with the special provision relating to the incomes of political parties.

"The petitioner is seeking direction that the political parties must disclose the name and all other particulars of the person paying any amount of money to it, and no amount can be received in cash so as to maintain transparency in the political funding," the plea said.

It said Section 13A was introduced in the Act and income of a political party received by way of interest on securities, income from house property or income from other sources and any income by way of voluntary contributions are exempted from the computation of total income.

The plea has also sought a direction to the poll panel to scrutinise Form 24A contribution reports of all recognised political parties, and to require them to deposit the amount received by way of contributions for which address and/or PAN have not been furnished.

It said the poll panel should be directed to issue notices to the defaulting political parties under the Election Symbol Order, 1968, as to why the reserved symbol shall not be suspended or withdrawn for the failure to submit Form 24A contribution reports with full particulars within a prescribed period.

"The injury to the public is the violation of the fundamental right to information of the voter, as guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution. This violation is primarily caused by Section 13A(d) of the Income Tax Act, 1961, which allows political parties to receive anonymous cash donations below Rs 2,000," the plea said.

The plea also referred to the apex court's 2024 judgement, which had struck down the electoral bonds scheme.

The scheme, which was notified by the government on January 2, 2018, was pitched as an alternative to cash donations made to political parties as part of efforts to bring in transparency in political funding.

Modi to visit Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan; attend SCO summit

(West) said India and Uzbekistan have maintained "extensive and fruitful engagements" over the years in both bilateral and multilateral formats.

Highlighting the depth of economic ties, the MEA Secretary said India is among Uzbekistan's top 10 trading partners, with bilateral trade and investments together close to USD 1 billion.

"We have wide-ranging cooperation in the fields of critical minerals, pharma, education, information technology, and the health sector," he said.

George also highlighted India's growing educational footprint in Uzbekistan, stating that there are more than 16,000 Indian students in the country and four Indian university campuses.

Major Indian investments in Uzbekistan are in sectors including pharmaceuticals, amusement parks, automobile components and education, the MEA official said.

The Prime Minister's programme in Tashkent will also include a banquet lunch hosted by the Uzbek President in honour of the Prime Minister.

"The Prime Minister's visit will reaffirm the close, multifaceted, and growing strategic partnership between India and Uzbekistan," George further said.

The Prime Minister will further attend the opening ceremony of the 6th World Nomad Games, which celebrates the rich cultural heritage of Central Asia.

The four-day visit is expected to provide an opportunity for India to deepen its strategic and economic engagement with Uzbekistan and strengthen its participation in the SCO, while advancing cooperation with Central Asian partners across security, connectivity, trade, technology, education and culture.

Kishtwar observes bandh over minor girl's rape, death

have been subjected to repeatedsexualassaults by a teacher at her school for several months, resulting in her pregnancy. She later died, following an alleged attempt to terminate her pregnancy in the Chatroo area, officials said.

Police had arrested the accused teacher who was identified as Khalid Ahmed Sheikh, a Grade-II teacher and in-charge headmaster of Middle School, Bumalpora,at Inderwal, along with his brother on August 20.

A total of five people had so far been apprehended by police in this case, according to officials.

An FIR was registered under provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) pertaining to rape and death caused by miscarriage, among other offences, besides the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

A Special Investigation Team headed by Additional SP, Kishtwar, Pardeep Singh was constituted to conduct a thorough, scientific and time-bound probe. The SIT comprises DSP Nitish Sharma, Chatroo police station SHO InspRishi Kumar and other officers.

During the investigation, police allegedly found that Sheikh had repeatedly sexually assaulted the minor, resulting in her pregnancy. The probe further revealed that the accused, allegedly with the help of his brother, administered medicines purportedly to terminate her pregnancy, officials said. The minor was initially taken to the public health centre aat Chatroo but was later shifted to the district hospital, Kishtwar, by the accused and others, allegedly in connivance with a hospital daily-wager working as a sweeper, officials said.

She underwent medical treatment and an ultrasound examination before being referred to another facility, where an attempt was allegedly made to induce delivery through surgery. She delivered a stillborn child during the procedure and subsequently died.

Apart from Sheikh and his brother, the SIT later arrested three more persons, including the health department daily-wager, for their alleged role in the conspiracy to conceal the sexual assault and terminate the minor's pregnancy, taking the total number of arrests to five.

Police said further arrests would be made wherever warranted by evidence.

The incident had triggered protests across Kishtwar. A complete bandh was observed in the Chatroo belt on Friday, while protests were held in several parts of the district after Friday prayers.

JMC Legal Notice Rejected as ‘Baseless’ by News Portal Managing Editor

JAMMU, AUG 27: The Managing Editor of a local news portal Cross Town has rejected as “baseless, unwarranted and legally unviable” the legal notice issued by JMC Joint Commissioner (Administration) Rajeev Kumar Khajuria over reports published by the portal.

In his legal reply through counsel, the Managing Editor maintained that the reports were published in public interest and were based on government orders, official records, public notifications and complaints. The reply denied any personal malice and said the reports sought to highlight alleged administrative and procedural issues concerning cadre management and statutory compliance.

The reply also disputed several contentions raised in the notice, including those relating to seniority lists, assignment of duties and promotion of engineers, asserting that the reporting was based on official documents and government orders.

Rejecting the demand for an unconditional apology and retraction, the Managing Editor called for withdrawal of the legal notice and stated that any legal proceedings would be defended “vigorously”, while reserving all statutory rights and legal remedies.