

FROM PAGE ONE

India rejects OIC reference to J&K, calls it factually incorrect

Jammu & Kashmir.

In the statement, the MEA also said, "Repeated endorsement of such motivated narratives only raises serious questions on the credibility of OIC."

"Instead of offering a platform to Pakistan to peddle its fabricated and motivated propaganda, OIC will be better advised to counsel Pakistan, which has a well-documented record of supporting and sponsoring terrorism, to look inwards and address the continuing threat of terrorism emanating from territories under its control," it said.

The OIC Contact Group comprises Azerbaijan, Pakistan, Turkiye, Saudi Arabia and Niger. At its meeting in New York on Tuesday, the group reaffirmed its support for what it described as the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination.

EAM Jaishankar raises India's concerns with Marco Rubio

pands sanctions targeting Russia's energy and defence sectors and its networks involved in circumventing existing sanctions. The broader objective of the law is to increase economic pressure on Moscow over the war in Ukraine.

For India, the issue is particularly sensitive because Russian crude has become an important part of its energy sourcing. Any major disruption to those supplies or additional costs linked to sanctions could have implications for India's energy security and wider trade.

India has maintained that its energy needs to remain a key consideration in decisions over crude imports. Reacting to the passage of the US legislation, the Ministry of External Affairs had said New Delhi was monitoring developments and would take steps to protect its economic interests.

"As stated on several earlier occasions, India remains firmly committed to ensuring energy security for its 1.4 billion people," the MEA said.

"It will continue to do so through diversified sourcing and on the basis of evolving market dynamics," it added. The ministry also said the issue had already been discussed at senior levels between India and the US in recent months.

"The issue has been discussed at high levels in recent months with various US interlocutors," the MEA said.

"Its potential implications for not just the bilateral relationship but also the international energy market have been very clearly articulated by the Indian side," it added.

Rubio struck a more positive tone after his meeting with Jaishankar, highlighting the wider strategic relationship between the two countries.

"Great to meet with Indian External Affairs Minister SJaishankar in New York today. Together, we are building on the US-India strategic partnership and coordinating on key regional priorities and upcoming multilateral efforts," Rubio posted on X.

Neither side publicly provided details of any specific understanding reached on the sanctions' legislation.

Cases withdrawn against 20 persons

severe unrest, following which multiple cases of rioting and arson were registered bypolice. Out of the 87 identified accused in the rioting cases, 81 were arrested, and criminal proceedings began against them. Following the review, Ladakh police recommended that criminal charges against 20 of these accusedbe formally withdrawn.

The proposal was sent to the LG for approval, and the same was granted today by Saxena in the "larger interest of peace and public tranquility."

Saxena said this decision would ensure that these 20 individuals, discharged of the criminal charges, move forward positively with their lives and careers.

"By prioritising justice and healing over protracted litigation, the decision aims at fostering a more peaceful, united, and harmonious society in Ladakh. I extend my sincere gratitude to Union Home MinisterAmit Shahfor his constant guidance and sympathetic approach in matters pertaining to the victims and their families," he said.

3 landmines defused near LoC

cials said.

Another anti-personnel mine was recovered by an Army patrolat Qasba in Haveli tehsil of the district. It was safely defused by the troops, the officials added.

Yesterday, Army's bomb disposal squad had safely destroyed three landmines in a forward village in Mendhar, Poonch.

Education, health top priorities of govt to compete globally: Omar

prepared to face the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

He emphasised the need to incorporate emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence into the curriculum and equip students with the knowledge and skills required for future.

Highlighting the challenge of student retention, the chief minister said Jammu and Kashmir performs well at the primary and middle-school levels in comparison to the national scenario, but the retention rate declines significantly as students reach higher classes.

"Secondary schools need to take concrete steps to bring down school dropout rate," he said, underscoring the need for concerted efforts to ensure that children remain within the education system through the higher secondary level.

He also stressed that government and private schools should work together rather than view each other as competing systems. He said children studying in both government and private schools were equally the future of Jammu and Kashmir and called for policies that enable private educational institutions to contribute effectively to the education ecosystem.

Referring to the legislation on private universities this year, Omar said the initiative was aimed at creating opportunities within Jammu and Kashmir so that students do not have to leave the region in search of quality private higher education.

He expressed appreciation for the enthusiasm and performance of the participating students at a large gathering at SKICC and the participation of children from different parts of Jammu and Kashmir, other parts of the country and abroad.

He said the participation of students from places such as Kerala, Karnataka and Rajasthan, along with international participants, in the competition in Srinagar was a positive indication of the growing educational and cultural connect with Jammu and Kashmir.

The chief minister appreciated the mental arithmetic abilities demonstrated by the young participants.

He said the achievements of the students were a credit to their parents, teachers and ALOHA International, and congratulated all participants, emphasising that participation itself was an achievement.

"You are all winners. Whether you took back a trophy from here or not, just being here and being able to compete is a victory and is a win," he said.

Omar said the government would explore taking the ALOHA programme forward in government schools to give students wider access to such learning opportunities.

"This is something that we need to incorporate into the government school system as well, so that we give our children a level playing field," he said, adding that efforts would

be made to expand the ALOHA family in Jammu and Kashmir.

Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Director School Education Kashmir Naseer Ahmed Wani, Founder and President ALOHA Loh Mun Sung, Director International ALOHA Kiran Motwani, MD ALOHA J&K Mubashir Wafai, besides teachers, students and parents, were present on the occasion.

DoPT has cleared 23,000 promotions: Jitendra

interaction with a delegation of the Central Secretariat Group-C Employees' Association.

DrSingh said the government was keen to provide a work-friendly environment to employees so that they remain motivated and are able to discharge their responsibilities effectively.

He said that while employees may have a range of demands, their genuine issues would be looked into through the appropriate mechanism.

He also said that inputs received from employees on service and cadre-related matters are important and should continue to be brought before the concerned authorities.

The representatives thanked the minister for his continued interaction with employee bodies and for providing them an opportunity to place their concerns directly before him.

Banks to remain open on Sunday

from September 28 to 30, 2026, following the weekend holidays on September 26 and 27, the government has taken proactive steps to ensure the banking services needs of citizens, the statement said.

"In order to ensure that the genuine banking needs of the public are not adversely affected for an extended period, all Public Sector Banks and Regional Rural Banks will function normally on Sunday, the 27th of September, 2026," it said.

The Reserve Bank of India has granted approval for all bank branches, offices, ATM-link branches and currency chests to remain fully operational on September 27, it said.

The Department of Financial Services under the ministry of finance reiterated that the welfare and convenience of bank customers remainthe government's foremost priority.

The government and bank managements have appealed to unions to defer the proposed strike, and have also taken measures to ensure that essential banking services continue un-interrupted, it said.

UFBU's other demands include an update and improvement of pension, a uniform dearness allowance formula for all pensioners and an option for employees covered under the National Pension System (NPS) to switch to the old pension scheme (OPS).

Many public sector banks have started issuing advisories to their customers to use digital channels such as Mobile Banking, ATM, Internet Banking, BC Point and UPI for banking needs if the strike materialises.

Banks have also advised their customers to complete essential banking transactions well in advance of the proposed strike dates to avoid any inconvenience.

The proposed 3-day strike period also coincides with the half-yearly closing of banks on September 30, a date of particular significance for reconciliation, provisioning and treasury and market operations.

'Gangster' held from Delhi

tions group of police followed sustained efforts to trace him across several states over the past seven months.

He said since the gangster was a juvenile at the time of his arrestin the murder of another gangster Sumit, he was lodged in the observation home.

Singh and Pakistani nationals Mohammad Sunaullah (20) and Ahsan Anwar (21)had attacked police personnel with a pistol and escaped from the observation home. Two police personnel were injured in the incident.

While the two Pakistani nationals were arrested within around 20 hours of the escape, Singh remained absconding and was eventually traced to Delhi, police said.

The Pakistani nationals were intercepted near Ambala railway station while heading towards Nepal and were subsequently arrested.

The SSP said a Special Investigation Team (SIT), headed by the Superintendent of Police (Operations), was constituted to track the escapees and investigate the wider criminal network.

Police teams conducted raids and searches at several locations, including Gorakhpur, Kolkata, Delhi, Maharashtra, Chandigarh, Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal, as the accused was frequently changing his location, the SSP said.

"Efforts were being made continuously to arrest him. He was changing locations frequently and moving between different states. He was finally arrested from Delhi," the officer said.

He said Singh was wanted in over a dozen criminal cases.

Record savings on expenses under Ayushman Bharat: Modi

the occasion, Modi said Ayushman Bharat was rolled out eight years ago with the idea that every Indian should have access to quality and affordable healthcare.

"Today, more than 60 crore beneficiaries have access to Rs 5 lakh annual health cover making it the largest healthcare scheme in the world," he said in his post.

"It has enabled record savings on medical expenses, thus benefitting the poor and middle class," he said.

"Ayushman Arogya Mandirs have already recorded over 500 crore visits, strengthening primary healthcare at the grassroots," he said.

Union Health Minister J P Nadda, in a separate post on X, said more than 60 crore people were covered under Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PM-JAY), with 48.54 crore Ayushman cards created so far.

More than 13 crore people have already availed treatment under the scheme, while hospitalisation and treatment worth more than Rs 2 lakh crore has been availed through over 39,000 empanelled public and private hospitals across the country, Nadda said.

According to government data, over 48.51 crore people had Ayushman cards as of September 21, while AB-PMJAY had funded 13.25 crore hospital admissions worth Rs 2.03 lakh crore through more than 38,000 empanelled public and private hospitals as of August 31.

Nadda said the significance of these numbers went beyond statistics, pointing to families protected from the burden of medical expenses and patients receiving timely treatment without the fear of financial hardship.

"Behind every number is a story - a family protected from the burden of medical debt, a patient receiving timely treatment, a loved one relieved of pain, and a household able to face illness without the fear of financial hardship.

"Hearing directly from beneficiaries and witnessing their experiences is a powerful reminder of the impact of this historic journey of Seva," Nadda said in his post.

"Guided by the vision of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji, we remain steadfast in our commitment to strengthen an accessible, affordable and inclusive healthcare system, ensuring that every citizen can access quality healthcare with dignity and without financial hardship.

"More than half a billion lives covered. Millions of stories of hope. One unwavering Sankalp - Seva and Health for All," he stated.

AB-PMJAY was launched on September 23, 2018, to provide cashless hospitalisation cover of up to Rs 5 lakh per family annually for secondary and tertiary care. It is the fi-

nancial protection component of the broader Ayushman Bharat programme.

The programme also includes Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, which seek to strengthen comprehensive primary healthcare, along with the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission and the Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission

Won't surrender in war with US: Iran President

stance of a foreign leader addressing the world body while their country is at war with the host nation. Defending his country, Pezeshkian held up large photos of the late Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and the more than 150 schoolchildren killed on the first days of the war.

"We have not defended ourselves. We are not terrorists," Pezeshkian said at the General Assembly. "Our innocent people have been the targets of cowardly attacks and aggressions imposed upon our country. And we defended ourselves with utmost strength. America and Israel attacked us."

He added of the United States: "Yes, they did hit us, but we did not bend the knee." Towards the end of his speech, Pezeshkian called out Trump by name.

"It must be understood by Trump and those who seek to bully us that we are ready for dialogue and diplomacy and negotiations without accepting the language of force," he said.

He also said one thing that was measurably false: "We did not hit civilian populations." Mariners and migrant workers in the region have been among the civilians killed in Iran's attacks since the war began.

Turning to Iran's nuclear programme, he said peaceful nuclear technology was part of the country's development, and his country would not accept such technology remaining exclusively in the hands of a few countries.

Arriving in New York under heavy security and scrutiny, Pezeshkian - who, within Iran's political landscape, is considered a moderate politician.

US President Donald Trump had yesterday used the same stage to suggest he may "annihilate" the Islamic Republic if a deal isn't reached soon to end the nearly seven-month war.

Hours later, Trump told reporters that his chief envoys, Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, met for about three hours with the Iranian officials on the sidelines of the annual gathering. But he offered few details about how the discussions transpired or the substance of the exchange.

"It was a very good meeting," Trump said. The president later added that the Iranian officials were "not the highest level, but it's something." Also on Tuesday, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Trump is open to meeting with Pezeshkian while he's in New York.

Satish Poonia gets J&K, Rajkumar Bhatia UT of Ladakh

Jardosh as co-in-charges. BJP vice-president Baijayant Jay Panda will oversee Maharashtra, assisted by Amit Malviya, Sadanand Shet Tanawade and Kamaljeet Sehrawat.

In other appointments, Biplab Kumar Deb has been made in-charge of Madhya Pradesh, while Sanjay Bhatia will oversee Rajasthan. Gajendra Patel has been appointed in-charge of Jharkhand and Shrikant Sharma will handle Himachal Pradesh.

As part of the organisational changes, the BJP has also reshuffled its communication team. National general secretary Anil Baluni has been appointed coordinator of the party's communication department, which includes its national media and social media units.

Ashish Usha Agrawal, who was recently appointed co-convenor of the national media department, has now been made its convenor, replacing Baluni.

The party has also appointed new office-bearers for its social media unit as part of the wider organisational exercise.

Oppn demands CEC's removal

and the Election Commission (EC) had committed an act of treason by organising "vote chori".

Reacting to areport that Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi had repeatedly objected to decisions and orders issued without their knowledge, former Chief Election Commissioners O P Rawat and S Y Quraishi also weighed into the row.

While Rawat said the way changes to the statutory voter registration Form 6 were brought about is "absolutely wrong and illegal", Quraishi questioned whether elections could be held on electoral rolls prepared through a legally flawed revision exercise.

The reactions poured in after the report revealed that questions were raised on issues related to the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls within the three-member EC itself, time and again, by two Election Commissioners.

The national rollout of the SIR has been under the supervision of all three Commissioners. But Sandhu and Joshi have formally objected, on record, at least 14 times over the last 10 months -- four times on a single day -- to decisions taken and orders issued, they say, without their knowledge, the news report said.

Incidentally, Sandhu's name figured among the people with discrepancies in their SIR forms.

The Election Commission asserted that all its official orders, decisions and administrative directions carry full legal sanctions and that differing views and observations are a normal part of deliberation in any institution.

In a statement, the EC also said that suggestions given by the commissioners were for further improving the electoral processes.

The EC said it remains fully committed to executing its constitutional duties with complete integrity, recognising its vital role in advancing Indian democracy.

Opposition parties have been critical of the EC over the SIR, claiming it was meant to target electors not aligned to the BJP and its allies.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge also lashed out at Kumar.

"On 24 April 2026, 73 opposition Rajya Sabha MPs had submitted a new Notice of Motion to the Secretary General to remove CEC Kumar. The Monsoon Session of Parliament has not yet been prorogued. Will the Hon'ble Rajya Sabha Chairman now decide on that pending Notice?" Kharge said.

The country will demand answers from Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he said.

Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal said CEC Kumar should be suspended immediately. Demanding the filing of an FIR to probe who is behind the CEC's actions, Sibal also said that all the work on finalising the voters list should be stopped and the Supreme Court should think about resorting to the extraordinary power of holding fresh elections.

Senior Congress spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi said there was no doubt remaining that CEC Kumar had no right to remain in office and must resign.

Pak human rights situation raised at UNHRC

human rights defenders, and ensure accountability.

In a separate intervention, Mariana Katzarova, a representative of United for Human Rights, raised concerns over the situation of religious minorities in Pakistan, including Hindus, Christians, Sikhs and Kalash communities.

The speaker said religious minorities, who, according to the intervention, constitute around 3.5 per cent of Pakistan's population, face discrimination and attacks. The intervention referred to the August 2023 violence in Jaranwala, Punjab, where Christian homes and churches were attacked following allegations of blasphemy against two

Christian men.

The speaker cited a Human Rights Commission of Pakistan report concerning the use of loudspeakers at a mosque near Christian settlements during the Jaranwala violence and referred to reported attacks on a Hindu temple in Punjab.

The intervention also raised the alleged desecration of 76 gravestones in Kotli and Kashmir and referred to the June 2026 killing of an elderly Sikh couple.

The speaker urged the Human Rights Council to call on Pakistan to address what was described in the intervention as systematic discrimination against religious minorities and to uphold protections under Articles 2, 18, 26 and 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Maharaja Hari Singh's birth anniversary celebrated across J&K

Cake-cutting ceremonies were also held at several places amid the raising of slogans by those who took part in the celebrations.

Hamas finance chief killed: Netanyahu

ister Israel Katz said that the targeted strike was executed as a joint effort by the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) and the Israeli Security Agency.

"A short while ago in Khan Younis, the IDF eliminated Hamas terrorist organisation finance department head Muhammad Abu Alwan," the statement read.

"The Prime Minister and Defence Minister commend the IDF and the ISA for this precise operation and for their aggressive action to thwart our enemies," it added.

Israeli leadership emphasised that operations against the group's leadership and financial networks would continue uninterrupted until Hamas "no longer exists in Gaza."

"We will continue to hunt down Hamas commanders and operatives, target its sources of funding, and destroy its terrorist infrastructure," Netanyahu and Katz warned. "We will not allow Hamas to rebuild its strength, nor will we stop until Hamas no longer exists in Gaza."

The elimination of Abu Alwan marks the latest high-profile strike against Hamas's financial infrastructure in the enclave.

Earlier last month, Netanyahu warned Hamas that Israel would intensify targeted strikes against those responsible for launching drones, balloons and kites from the Gaza Strip if the launches do not cease immediately, as Hamas accused Israel of using children's kites as a pretext to escalate "attacks" on Gaza.

In a post on X, the Prime Minister of Israel's official handle said that Netanyahu and Defense Minister Israel Katz held "a situational assessment this evening regarding the threat of drones, balloons and kites launched from the Gaza Strip toward Israel. The discussion was attended by Chief of the General Staff, Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir, the Head of the National Security Council, and senior IDF officials."

Israel warned Hamas that "if the launches towards Israel do not cease immediately, the IDF will act to increase targeted strikes against those responsible for the launches and will evacuate the population from areas used as launch sites for kites, drones, and balloons."

The Prime Minister clarified that " there will be no return to the state of affairs prior to October 7. Israel will not allow the Hamas terrorist organization or any other element in the Gaza Strip to threaten our communities again and compromise our citizens' sense of security."

On the other hand, Hamas accused Israel of fabricating a pretext to escalate "attacks" on Gaza after Israel threatened strikes over kites flown by Palestinian children, Al Jazeera reported.

According to Al Jazeera, Hamas spokesperson Hazem Qassem said in a statement on the group's website that the move was "threatening children".

He called on the US, mediating and guarantor states, and the UN Security Council to pressure Israel to halt its escalation in Gaza, which he said was an attempt to unravel a ceasefire that the Palestinian side remains "fully committed to".

Kavinder calls for education that goes beyond degrees

portant instrument of social transformation, opening new avenues of opportunity for local youth, he said.

He said the impact of establishing a university was not confined to one generation but extended to generations to come. Visionary leadership, he said, should consider not only present requirements but also the possibilities and challenges of the next 20, 30 and 50 years.

Describing India as a young nation, the governor said that universities needed to further strengthen their linkages with industry to channelise the energy and potential of the youth. "Your goal should not be limited to securing a job. You should also aspire to become capable of creating employment opportunities for others," he added.

He said that India today was witnessing a growing ecosystem of innovation, startups and entrepreneurship. Universities, therefore, should create an environment where students become not merely job seekers, but employment creators, problem-solvers and innovators capable of turning new ideas into reality, he said.

Referring to the National Education Policy-2020, he said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had emphasised making education more holistic, flexible, multidisciplinary and aligned with future requirements. Access, equity, quality, affordability and accountability were among the important pillars of the policy, while research, innovation, skills and multidisciplinary learning had been encouraged in higher education.

He said that the emphasis on skills, startups and innovation also provided a clear direction to universities to prepare young people who could contribute to the nation through knowledge, skills, innovation and entrepreneurship.

The governor expressed particular appreciation for the university's focus on education related to mountain and mountaineering activities. He said that Himachal Pradesh possessed natural and distinctive potential in this field.

"Our mountains are not merely a symbol of our identity; they are also important foundations for tourism, adventure sports, environmental conservation, disaster management, sports science and local employment," he said.

He urged the university to integrate education, training, research and practical experience in this field and develop an exemplary model through which the youth of Himachal Pradesh could establish themselves at the national and international levels.

Addressing the students, Gupta said they were the greatest asset of the university and should make the best use of the opportunities available to them. He called upon them to respect their teachers, remain committed to continuous learning and move forward with technology while remaining connected with their roots and culture.

He advised the students not to fear failure, saying that failure was not the end but an opportunity to learn and improve. "Never compromise on three things in life-discipline, hard work and honesty. If these three become an integral part of your life, the path to success will continue to open before you," he said. Earlier, Shri Sai University Chancellor SKPunj welcomed the governor and highlighted the academic journey and achievements of the university.

Deputy Commissioner, Kangra, Hemraj Bairwa, SP Kulbushan Verma, university's Managing Director Tripta Punj, Pro-Vice Chancellor Tushar Punj, Vice-President Riya Punj and Vice-Chancellor (Prof) VPPatial were among those present on the occasion.