



Aftermath of the massive protest over the statehood demand in Leh

LADAKH UNREST

CHALLENGE IN THE HIMALAYAS

ANUJA KHUSHU

As tensions rise in India's northernmost Union Territory, the Centre calls for peace while protesters demand constitutional guarantees and statehood. Is this the beginning of a political awakening or a crisis spiralling out of control?

The mountain air of Leh, usually carrying the scent of juniper and prayer, was thick with smoke and tension last week as Ladakh witnessed one of the most volatile moments in its post-2019 history.

What began as a hunger strike led by Sonam Wangchuk, a prominent environmentalist and educator, erupted into street protests, clashes, and, ultimately, violence. Four people died and dozens injured. Curfew in place. The internet has been suspended. Leh is boiling.

The protests had been called by the Leh Apex Body in support of climate activist Sonam Wangchuk, who has been on a 35-day fast to press for Ladakh's long-standing demands.

On September 24, the scene outside the NDS Memorial Ground in Leh was unlike any in recent memory. Large crowds of young people, many draped in Ladakhi flags, chanted slogans, marched through the city, and called for "justice" and "protection for our land and identity." Tensions escalated quickly.

Witnesses say the crowd turned agitated after news spread that two elderly participants in the hunger strike, had collapsed and were rushed to the hospital. In a matter of hours, Leh, usually a picture of serenity, was engulfed in chaos.

A government vehicle was set on fire. Stone pelting began. The local BJP office was damaged. Tear gas was fired. Baton charges followed. By evening, the police opened fire, claiming it was necessary to control the crowd. A curfew was immediately imposed across the city. Schools were shut and mobile internet services were suspended to prevent misinformation and further mobilisation.

The Union Home Ministry respond-

ed swiftly, condemning the violence but reaffirming its commitment to Ladakh's development and cultural protection. "The Government of India remains open to dialogue. Several steps have already been taken, including raising ST reservation, recognising local languages, and empowering women in governance," read the official statement.

Meanwhile, the violence in Leh erupted just days before an October 6 meeting planned between the Union Home Ministry and Ladakh representatives.

Human Cost:

While politics churns and demands are tabled, human lives have borne the brunt: Among the deceased are youths in their late teens and twenties; a man aged 46 is also reported among them, and in addition to physical injury, protests and curfews disrupt daily life: loss of work, schools shut, shops closed, movement restricted.

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The CHANCELLOR
wishes blissful
Maha Navmi and
happy Dussehra
to its readers

Demands: What Ladakh Seeks?

The protesters' demands are multiple; they interlink political, constitutional, ecological, economic justice. These include:

Statehood for Ladakh

Elevate Ladakh from a Union Territory directly administered by New Delhi to a full state, with its own state legislature and more autonomy

Inclusion under the Sixth Schedule

Under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, regions with tribal majorities have protection over land, natural resources, and the right to self-governance through Autonomous District Councils or equivalent institutions. Ladakh is seeking similar constitutional safeguards

Job Quotas / Employment Security

Youth unemployment has been a flashpoint. Locals demand priority in government jobs, promises fulfilled, recruitment accelerated

Protection of Environment and Natural Resources

Ladakh's ecology, fragile glaciers, dry cold deserts, limited water, high altitude ecology, is under stress from militarization, tourism, unregulated development, mining. Local communities want stronger environmental regulation, protection of land, water sources, and local capability to manage their natural resources

Democratic Representation/ Local Governance

Stronger structures of local governance, greater say in how affairs of Ladakh are run, through bodies like the Hill Council or comparable structures, elected rather than appointed, with real powers mattering

Language and cultural protections

Recognition and preservation of Ladakhi identity.



What Has Been Offered So Far:

Authorities pointed to these developments:

- ST reservations raised from 45% to 84%
- One-third reservation for women in Hill Development Councils
- Official recognition for Bhoti and Purgi languages
- Ongoing recruitment to thousands of government jobs
- Establishment of a High-Powered Committee to deliberate local demands.

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Prohibitory orders imposed across Leh:

In view of the escalating situation, the administration imposed prohibitory orders under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), effectively banning the assembly of five or more people, to prevent further unrest. "As notice cannot be served individually, this order is being passed ex parte. Any violation of this order shall invite punitive action under section 223 of BNS," stated the orders by Leh District Magistrate Romil Singh Donk.

Background: Ladakh as a UT

Ladakh was carved out of Jammu and Kashmir on October 31, 2019, following the abrogation of Article 370 and the subsequent reorganisation of the former state into two union territories: Jammu and Kashmir (with a legislative assembly), and Ladakh (without a legislative assembly). While both union territories are directly governed by the Central government, Jammu and Kashmir's legislative assembly allows its people to elect local leaders who can represent their concerns to the Centre. In

Curfew continues in Leh

Curfew continued in Leh town for the sixth consecutive day, as tensions persist following last week's violent protests. According to officials, Lieutenant Governor Kavinder Gupta is expected to chair a high-level security review meeting to assess the situation and consider phased relaxation of restrictions. Heavy deployment of police, CRPF, and ITBP personnel remains in place across curfew-bound zones. ITBP units carried out a flag march on Sunday morning to maintain public

order and discourage further unrest. While the overall atmosphere remains peaceful and authorities had allowed relaxation in a phased manner to allow residents access to essential services. The curfew was imposed on September 24, following deadly clashes that erupted amid growing anger and frustration among Ladakhi youth over the five-year stalemate in negotiations with the Central government regarding demands for statehood and constitutional safeguards.



contrast, the absence of an assembly in Ladakh means its residents lack this political representation. Consequently, the initial enthusiasm surrounding Ladakh's separation from Jammu and Kashmir was soon tempered by the harsh reality of limited local political voice. Many feel that after the abrogation of Article 370 and bifurcation from Jammu & Kashmir in 2019, Ladakh was left in a legal grey area. "We became a Union Territory, but not one with a legislature. So we lost political power. Now, we want that power back," said a youth from Leh. Ladakh isn't just a remote Himalayan outpost. It's a strategic frontier, bordering both China and Pakistan, and hosting some of India's most sensitive military zones. It's also a global tourist destination and home to some of the planet's most fragile ecosystems. Beneath its geopolitical and ecological value lies a cultural soul, a blend of Tibetan Buddhism, Shia Islam, tribal traditions, and high-altitude survival. Locals fear that without constitutional safeguards, this region will be lost to rapid commercialisation and unregulated development. "We've already seen outsiders inter-

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ests buying land, eyeing glaciers, and trying to reshape our traditions. If we don't act now, it might be too late," warned Wangchuk during his fast.

The Road Ahead: Uncertain But Crucial

The situation in Ladakh is more

than a law-and-order matter; it is a delicate and complex process of addressing identity, governance, and aspirations in a changing India. The unrest highlights the ongoing challenge of balancing infrastructure-led development with the need for meaningful political representation and

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LG Kavinder Gupta condemns violence

Appeals for peace and unity

Ladakh Lieutenant Governor Kavinder Gupta has strongly condemned the recent violence in the region and appealed to all communities and political parties to maintain peace, unity, and social harmony. Expressing deep anguish over the loss of lives, he called for collective responsibility in restoring normalcy.

"I extend my heartfelt condolences to the families of those who lost their lives," the LG said. "I appeal to religious communities and political parties to identify those responsible for creating chaos and help stop them. We must all come together to make Ladakh a peaceful place for all."

Taking serious note of incidents of stone-pelting, arson, and destruction of public property, Gupta directed law enforcement and district administration officials to take firm and immediate action to restore order and protect citizens.

"Violence in any form is unacceptable and will not be tolerated," the LG said. "Those involved in

this heart-wrenching incident will be brought to justice and dealt with strictly as per the law."

Gupta emphasised that democratic institutions and public infrastructure must be protected, and warned against attempts to derail peace through unlawful actions.

He urged the public to remain vigilant against misinformation and not be misled by disruptive elements seeking to disturb the region's social fabric.

"Our strength lies in unity and dialogue, not in violence," he said. "I urge every citizen to extend full cooperation to the administration in maintaining peace and stability."

Reiterating the government's commitment to addressing the aspirations of Ladakh's people, LG Gupta assured that all genuine demands will be considered in a fair and timely manner.

"The administration remains fully dedicated to preserving the interests of Ladakh while ensuring inclusive development, progress, and security for all," he concluded.

Wangchuk under probe for foreign links: DGP Jamwal

Following unprecedented violence in Ladakh's capital, prominent climate activist Sonam Wangchuk has been detained under the National Security Act (NSA) and transferred to Jodhpur Central Jail in Rajasthan. Authorities allege that Wangchuk was involved in inciting violence and is under investigation for links to a Pakistani intelligence operative, foreign funding violations, and subversive activities.

Addressing the media, Ladakh DGP S.D. Singh Jamwal revealed that police had recently arrested a Pakistani intelligence officer who was allegedly in contact with Wangchuk and had shared protest footage across the border. Wangchuk's attendance at a Dawn-hosted event in Pakistan and visits to Bangladesh were also deemed suspicious.

"His references to the Arab Spring and youth-led agitations in Nepal and Sri Lanka show a pattern of calculated provocation," Jamwal said. "The matter is still under investigation, including possible FCRA violations and other foreign links."

"The investigation has unearthed disturbing links, including the role of a Pakistani Intelligence Operative (PIO) who had been sharing videos of Wangchuk's protests across the border," said DGP Jamwal.

Describing Wangchuk as the key



person behind violence, Jamwal said "What has been found in the investigation (against Wangchuk) cannot be disclosed at this moment. The process is going on and if you look at his profile and history, it is all available on YouTube. His speech worked as instigation as he talked about the Arab spring and the recent unrest in Nepal, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. "He had his own agenda. There is a probe of foreign funding, violation of FCRA against him. We have a PIO with us who was reporting across the border, sending videos of the protests led by Wangchuk," Jamwal said.

Authorities accused Wangchuk of exploiting public sentiment and the ongoing demands for Statehood and Sixth Schedule status, claiming he deliberately disrupted the atmosphere ahead of a planned informal dialogue between Ladakh represen-

tatives and the Centre.

The DGP also cited Wangchuk's participation in international events, including one hosted by The Dawn in Pakistan and visits to Bangladesh, labeling them as "suspicious."

According to police, approximately 6,000 persons participated in the violent protests, which saw government buildings, political party offices, vehicles, and the Secretariat attacked and set on fire.

To a question on foreign conspiracy in violence, he said three Nepal citizens were admitted to the hospital with bullet injuries and involvement of some others has also come to light.

He said, in all, 50 people have been taken detained in connection with violence, including at least six suspected ringleaders.

At least, half-a-dozen of them are suspected to be ringleaders, he said.

"Obviously, Wangchuk, who was the main instigator, has been lodged in an outside jail," the DGP said.

"The violence aimed to create anarchy. Our forces were left with no option but to open fire in self-defence to prevent Leh from burning down entirely," said Jamwal, who himself sustained minor injuries during the unrest.

He, however, dismissed the allegation by the Leh Apex Body and Kargil Democratic Alliance, the bodies which have been spearheading the agitation for Statehood and Sixth Schedule status that forces fired indiscriminately, saying that it was done only in self-defence and to prevent a larger flare-up. "If you look at the footage and the conditions in which our forces performed, they did a highly commendable job. I salute them for bringing the situation under control by 4 pm after the violence started around noon," the DGP said.

Among those injured were 70 to 80 CRPF and Ladakh Police personnel, including one CRPF officer with a serious spinal injury.

He, further, said an investigation is also underway into his alleged foreign funding violations. "The FCRA violation is a clear-cut case; it will be investigated by another agency," said the DGP.





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constitutional safeguards.

The Central government has taken significant steps to respond to local demands—raising reservations, recognizing regional languages, promoting women’s participation, and initiating recruitment drives. These measures demonstrate a clear commitment to Ladakh’s progress and the preservation of its cultural heritage.

However, many in Ladakh continue to seek stronger assurances that go beyond administrative actions—specifically, constitutional protections under the Sixth Schedule or the establishment of statehood, which could provide greater autonomy and security for local communities.

Moving forward, the government’s ability to engage in sustained dialogue, build consensus, and implement solutions that respect Ladakh’s unique geopolitical, ecological, and cultural context will be crucial. It is a moment that calls for patience, understanding, and cooperation from all stakeholders.

The path ahead is challenging, but with inclusive governance and continued commitment, there is hope that Ladakh’s future can be shaped in a way that balances development, security, and the preservation of its rich identity.

Sonam Wangchuk arrested under NSA, shifted to Jodhpur jail

On September 26, 2025, activist Sonam Wangchuk was arrested by Ladakh Police and charged under the stringent National Security Act (NSA).

His fast and subsequent speeches referencing the Arab Spring and Nepal’s Gen Z protests were seen as provocative by the government, which alleged that his actions incited the violent protests in Leh.

Wangchuk was apprehended just before a scheduled press conference via Google Meet and was subsequently transferred to Jodhpur Central Jail, located over 1,000 kilometers

from Ladakh. The Union Territory administration has also imposed a mobile internet blackout in Leh as a precautionary measure.

Speaking shortly before his arrest, he said: “I never wanted this. I always asked the youth to stay peaceful. But I cannot ignore the pain in their voices. They are not miscreants. They are frustrated citizens. Arresting me won’t silence Ladakh.”

The Home Ministry has accused Wangchuk of inciting the unrest through provocative statements and actions by politically motivated groups. Wangchuk, a prominent member of the Leh Apex Body (LAB) and the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), has been leading a five-year-long agitation for statehood and constitutional safeguards for the residents of Leh and Kargil. He has denied the allegations and condemned the violence.

In a related development, the government revoked the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) license of Wangchuk’s organisation, the Students’ Educational and Cultural Movement of Ladakh (SECMOL), citing multiple discrepancies in its accounts, including a fund transfer from Sweden deemed against the “national interest.”

Leh violence 'engineered', not spontaneous: Sources

Jammu: Senior government sources have strongly alleged that the September 24 violence in Leh was not a spontaneous uprising but a deliberately orchestrated event, with climate activist Sonam Wangchuk accused of playing a central role in misleading youth for “narrow political and personal motives.”

In background briefings to the media and in statements attributed to government officials, it has been revealed that the Centre had already scheduled a High-Powered Committee (HPC) meeting for October 6 to address the long-standing demands of the Apex Body of Leh (ABL) and the Kargil Democratic Alliance

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Centre open to dialogue with Ladakh bodies: MHA

Peace & stability are priority in Ladakh: LG Kavinder Gupta

THE CHANCELLOR NEWS DESK
JAMMU

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Monday reiterated that the Centre remains open to dialogue on Ladakh issues with the Apex Body Leh (ABL) and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) at any time, affirming that the doors will always remain open.

In an official statement, the MHA said, “The Government has always welcomed dialogue on Ladakh matters with the Apex Body Leh (ABL) and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA). We will continue to encourage discussions through the High-Powered Committee (HPC) on Ladakh or any other suitable platform.”

The ministry highlighted the positive outcomes of the dialogue mechanism established through the HPC, citing increased reservations for the Scheduled Tribes of Ladakh, the introduction of women’s reservation in the LAHDCs, and the protection of local languages. “Recruitment for 1,800 government posts in the Union Territory of Ladakh has already commenced,” the statement added. “We are confident that ongoing dialogue will yield the desired results soon.”

Earlier in the day, the LAB announced its withdrawal from talks with the Centre scheduled for October 6 in New Delhi, demanding a judicial inquiry into last week’s violence and the withdrawal of cases against those arrested.

On September 24, protests over statehood demands, led by environmental activist Sonam Wangchuk, turned violent, resulting in attacks on offices and the burning of the BJP office. Security personnel opened fire, leaving four dead and over 50 injured. Following the violence, restrictions were imposed in the town, which are now being gradually relaxed. The situation has remained calm since.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, chaired a high-level review meeting on Monday to assess the law and order situation in the Union Territory. The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary Dr. Pawan Kotwal, Director General of Police Dr. S.D. Singh Jamwal, Additional Director General of CRPF Rajesh Kumar,



along with senior Army and Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) officers.

Officials briefed the LG on recent developments, preparedness, and coordination among agencies to maintain peace. LG Gupta praised the responsible behavior of the people, noting their cooperation in maintaining calm during a sensitive period. “The people of Ladakh have shown remarkable maturity, restraint, and commitment to peace even in challenging circumstances. Their patience and cooperation reflect the true spirit of harmony that defines our region,” he said.

Acknowledging the efforts of security forces, police, and local administration, the LG urged officials to stay vigilant, responsive, and people-friendly. He stressed that law and order must be enforced firmly yet sensitively, keeping the welfare and sentiments of the local population in mind.

The Lieutenant Governor also directed enhanced intelligence gathering, regular community engagement, and prompt resolution of public grievances to strengthen trust between the administration and citizens. He appealed to the youth to channel their energies towards constructive nation-building, assuring that all legitimate concerns would be addressed through dialogue and democratic means.

Addressing the people of Ladakh, LG Gupta said, “Peace is the cornerstone of development. I urge all sections of society to maintain unity and harmony and not fall prey to the designs of anti-social and anti-national elements. The administration stands firmly with the people and will ensure their safety, dignity, and progress.”

Ladakh's crisis demands a middle path: Stobdan

THE CHANCELLOR NEWS DESK
JAMMU

Strategic affairs expert and former diplomat Phunchok Stobdan, in an interview with national news agency, spoke on the recent violence that shook the region, its underlying causes, and the complex socio-political challenges facing Ladakh today.

Asked about the trigger point behind the violence and the possibility of external forces being involved, Stobdan referred to the Ministry of Home Affairs' (MHA) statement. "The MHA has clarified that the unrest was instigated by certain elements, even naming the person responsible. There is little more to elaborate on that. It is an unfortunate incident that occurred on the 24th, but the situation is now under control," he said.

On the role of environmental activist Sonam Wangchuk in the unrest, Stobdan offered a measured perspective. “He is an individual and not a representative of the people of Ladakh. He belongs to an NGO. The media and others have amplified his importance, which is problematic in a democracy where unaccountable individuals can wield disproportionate influence. That said, what he does or

doesn't do is difficult to fully assess."

Stobdan highlighted the core issues leading to the unrest. “After the abrogation of Article 370, Ladakh became a Union Territory without a legislature or protections like Article 35A. The people of Ladakh have long demanded greater self-governance, similar to the tribal councils in the Northeast under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, where they can decide their development and governance through autonomous assemblies.”

He lamented government delays: "The government has been slow to respond, finding it difficult to agree on these demands for constitutional and technical reasons. Despite warnings, there has been a tendency to address such crises only after violence erupts, which is an old habit."

When questioned about Ladakh's sensitive border location near China and Pakistan, Stobdan acknowledged the challenges but urged not to overstate the border factor. "Yes, proximity to China and Pakistan complicates matters. These neighbors are undoubtedly watching the situation closely. But border sensitivity alone isn't unique, other Indian states also share borders. The complexity here also comes from the region's layered history, culture, and geography.

including proximity to Xinjiang and Tibet.”

Discussing potential resolutions, he advocated for exploring constitutional measures: “A middle path could involve a Sikkim-like formula under Article 371A, granting a degree of autonomy, or provisions under the Fifth Schedule. Alternatively, the existing Ladakh Autonomous Councils in Leh and Kargil could be empowered with greater legislative powers. The government appears to be considering such options, but delays remain a key issue.”

Regarding reports linking Sonam Wangchuk to instigation, Stobdan said, “There are media claims that cannot be independently verified. He has been active for a long time and has made statements calling for significant political changes, but the government has not taken enough preventive action to address such narratives.”

He dismissed suggestions linking recent violence to movements in Nepal or elsewhere as speculative. “Such debates and narratives are longstanding and have not suddenly emerged.”

On the present mood in Ladakh, Stobdan expressed cautious optimism: "The people of Ladakh are generally

peaceful, mostly Buddhists, and the factor of instigation remains unconfirmed officially. Restrictions remain in place under Section 144, and funerals are being held peacefully. Dialogue between the Centre and Ladakh representatives has resumed, with the next meeting scheduled soon.”

Asked about demands for statehood, Stobdan was pragmatic. "Granting statehood to a population of around three lakh is not feasible economically or demographically. Without a viable revenue base or industry, dependency on central subsidies would increase, limiting autonomy."

He also highlighted Ladakh's complex demographics. "Over 50% of Ladakh's population are Shia Muslims. The demand for autonomy or statehood involves anthropological and historical considerations, not just political or constitutional ones. Unlike tribal groups in the Northeast, Ladakhis do not fit neatly into existing constitutional categories, adding to the government's dilemma."

Stobdan concluded with hope for a solution: “A resolution is possible, though it may not meet all local expectations. The government must balance constitutional constraints, regional security, and the aspirations of Ladakh’s diverse communities.”



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(KDA), including concerns related to statehood and Sixth Schedule status.

“Despite agreeing to the new HPC members as suggested by ABL and keeping talks flexible, even considering preponement to September 25 or 26, violence was incited. Why was this done when talks were clearly on the table?” a senior official said, requesting anonymity.

The official said Wangchuk's past speeches, especially those referencing the Arab Spring and recent youth-led agitations in Nepal, now appear to be a "deliberate strategy" to create unrest in the otherwise peaceful region.

“He’s long hinted at wanting an Arab Spring-style protest. Was this about Ladakh, or was it a smoke-screen to cover up personal irregularities now surfacing in investigations?” the official asked.

Sources have also alleged that some statements by Congress leaders during the build-up to the protests seemed “too coordinated”, including suggestions to stone-pelting, shut-downs, and arson.

“They sounded less like concerns and more like instructions. The speed and scale of the violence indicate prior planning, not organic dissent,” said the official, adding that “the episode smacks of a larger conspiracy.”

Centre stands with J&K flood victims: Shivraj Singh

Rolls out PM-Kisan aid, MGNREGA boost

THE CHANCELLOR DESK
JAMMU

Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, today visited the flood-affected border village of Badyal Brahmana in R.S. Pura, Jammu, to assess the damage caused by recent floods.

The Minister toured the submerged farmlands, interacted with affected families and farmers, and announced a series of relief measures to support the victims of the calamity.

During his visit, Chouhan emphasised the Centre's commitment to standing with the people of Jammu and Kashmir in this time of distress.

"The Modi Government stands by the people of J&K in this time of crisis," he said, addressing a large gathering of farmers and residents.

The Minister said that teams from the Ministries of Home Affairs, Jal Shakti, Rural Development, and Agriculture have already surveyed the affected areas across the Union Territory. Final reports are awaited from both the Central teams and the J&K Government, which is preparing a memorandum of damages.

"Once the UT administration submits its assessment, the Cen-



tral government will leave no stone unturned in extending relief," Chouhan assured.

He was accompanied by Member of Parliament Jugal Kishore, J&K Agriculture Minister Javed Ahmad Dar, local MLAs, and senior officials from the Central and UT administrations.

After returning to Jammu city, Chouhan chaired a high-level review meeting with officials from the J&K government and later addressed a press conference.

The Minister also addressed the

issue of silt and sand deposits in agricultural fields due to floodwaters. He proposed that farmers should be allowed to utilize the sand deposited on their lands for their benefit.

"The Mining Department must relax norms to allow flood-hit farmers to use sand on their land," he suggested.

Chouhan revealed that the J&K government currently has Rs 2,499 crore available under the Disaster Management Fund, which will be utilized to address damages caused

KEY RELIEF MEASURES:

- Immediate release of one PM-Kisan instalment for flood-affected farmers
- Addl 50 man-days under MGNREGA, increasing entitlement to 150 days in flood-hit villages
- Compensation for livestock lost due to the floods
- Assistance for rebuilding damaged homes
- Over 5,000 houses reported damaged
- Each to receive Rs 1.3 lakh under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY)
- Addl assistance for constructing separate toilets
- Rs 76 crore to be released for SHGs impacted by the floods

by the floods. He assured that if more funds are required, the Central government will provide additional assistance.

Additionally, he said that the renovation of damaged canals and embankments would be taken up by the J&K government with support from the Centre.

India stands with Nepal on peace, progress: Modi

Congratulates Nepal's interim PM Sushila Karki • Extends condolences for tragic loss of life during recent protests in Nepal

THE CHANCELLOR DESK
JAMMU

Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a telephone conversation today with the Right Honourable Sushila Karki, Prime Minister of the Interim Government of Nepal.

Prime Minister Modi congratulated Prime Minister Karki on her recent appointment and extended his best wishes on behalf of the Government and people of India. He also expressed heartfelt condolences for the tragic loss of life during the recent protests in Nepal.

Reaffirming India's commitment to its close partnership with Nepal, Prime Minister Modi conveyed India's readi-



ness to work closely with the Nepali leadership to further strengthen the special ties between the two countries. He assured India's full support for Nepal's efforts towards restoring peace and stability and advancing the well-being of the Nepali people.

Prime Minister Karki thanked Prime Minister Modi for India's steadfast support and reciprocated his sentiments regarding the importance of deepening bilateral cooperation.

Prime Minister Modi also extended warm greetings to the people of Nepal on the occasion of the upcoming National Day. Both leaders agreed to remain in regular contact.

Modi transformed India, uplifted 25 cr from poverty: Amit Shah

THE CHANCELLOR DESK

NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Amit Shah praised the transformational leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, citing historic decisions and developmental milestones that have shaped the trajectory of modern India.

Speaking on the occasion of PM Modi's 75th birthday during an event in Delhi, Shah said the abrogation of Article 370 marked a decisive moment in India's history, ending decades of separatism in Jammu and Kashmir and fully integrating the region with the rest of the country.

He also highlighted the fulfillment of long-standing national aspirations during PM Modi's tenure, including the construction of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, the development of the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor, restoration of the Somnath Temple with gold, and the opening of the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor.

"In his 24 years of public service, Prime Minister Modi has never taken a single day off. His relentless dedication has elevated India from the



world's 11th largest economy to the 4th, with the aim of reaching the 3rd spot by 2027," Shah said.

Referring to the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, Shah reiterated PM Modi's goal of making India a global leader by August 15, 2047, the centenary of independence. He said the government is working towards building a developed, secure, and prosperous nation, and called on citizens to participate in this collective mission.

Shah also inaugurated the Narela-Bawana Waste-to-Energy Plant, which will process 3,000 metric tons of waste daily. This is part of the government's push toward green energy and circu-

lar economy. He noted that the infamous garbage mounds of Delhi, once a symbol of neglect, are now being transformed into power sources under the Modi government.

Shah lauded the government's pro-consumer tax reforms, saying the GST on 395 essential items used by common citizens has been slashed to 5% or even zero.

"Every Indian should resolve to buy locally-made products. Only then can we achieve a truly self-reliant and prosperous India," he said.

On the same day, Shah inaugurated and laid the foundation stones for various development projects in Delhi

worth approximately Rs 1,723 crore under the Seva Pakhwada initiative. He was joined by Delhi Chief Minister Smt. Rekha Gupta, Union Minister Shri Harsh Malhotra, and other dignitaries.

He explained that Seva Pakhwada, celebrated from September 17 to October 2 each year since 2014, is dedicated to public welfare activities in honor of PM Modi's birthday.

"Through this initiative, we are not just celebrating a birthday—we are reinforcing the resolve to serve the last person in society," Shah remarked.

In a sharp political attack, Shah questioned the motives behind the opposition's so-called "Ghuspaithiya Bachao Yatra" (Save Infiltrators March).

"The leader of the main opposition party is trying to win elections on the strength of infiltrators. They oppose efforts to clean the voter rolls. Why are they afraid of removing names of infiltrators?" Shah asked.

He affirmed the Modi government's firm support for cleansing the electoral rolls and protecting national integrity.

PM Modi embodies 'Nation First' spirit: Amit Shah

Extends greetings to PM Modi on 75th bday • Highlights Modi's role in poverty alleviation & economic growth

THE CHANCELLOR DESK

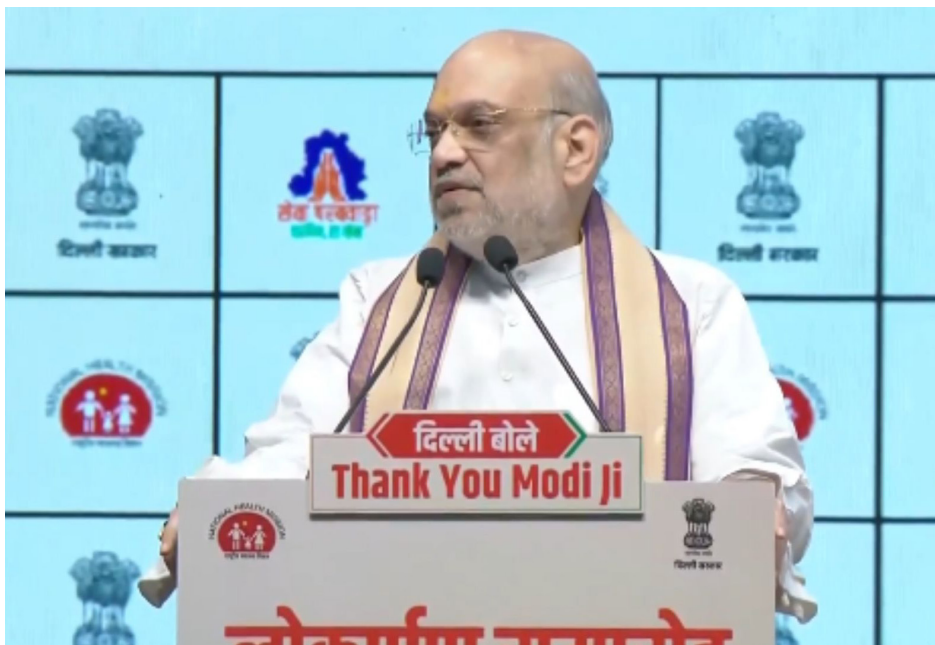
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Amit Shah, extended warm greetings to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the occasion of his 75th birthday, describing him as a symbol of sacrifice, dedication, and transformative leadership.

In a series of posts on social media platform X, Shah praised the Prime Minister's five-decade-long commitment to public service, calling him a "living inspiration of 'Nation First'." He highlighted Modi's contributions across various roles—from Sangh Pracharak, party karyakarta, Chief Minister of Gujarat, to his 11-year tenure as Prime Minister of India.

"Modi ji has brought integrity to governance, clarity to policies, and firmness to decisions," Shah said. "He has placed the marginalized, poor, women, and tribal communities at the centre of governance."

Shah noted that under PM Modi's



leadership, India has seen development in areas once considered unreachable. Citing key infrastructure projects such as the longest bridge in Assam, the Chenab railway bridge in Kashmir, and investments in semiconductors and digital infra-

structure, Shah said the Modi government has redefined development.

He added that the rise of UPI digital payments, even among street vendors, reflects the deep penetration of digital governance and inclusive financial growth.

Shah also credited the Prime Minister for lifting 600 million people out of poverty, stating that India has become the world's fourth-largest economy, rising from 11th place.

The Home Minister highlighted PM Modi's global stature, noting that 27 countries have awarded him their highest civilian honours. He said PM Modi is now recognised globally as a problem-solving leader and a bridge of dialogue amid global tensions.

"From the Moon's South Pole to the ocean depths of Dwarka, India is achieving milestones in both science and heritage under PM Modi's leadership," Shah said.

He further emphasized Modi's focus on self-reliance, pointing to achievements in indigenous vaccines, defence manufacturing, start-up ecosystems, agricultural reforms, and the Make in India mission.

"PM Modi is the epitome of sacrifice, austerity, and total dedication to the nation. Every decision he makes pushes the country forward," Shah said.

IIIM Incubator honoured with ‘Bharat Incubator Award 2025’

THE CHANCELLOR DESK
JAMMU

The Technology Business Incubator (TBI) of CSIR-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (CSIR-IIIM), Jammu, has been awarded the prestigious ‘Bharat Incubator Award 2025’ at the 4th Bharat Entrepreneurship Summit held at the NDMC Convention Centre, New Delhi. Organized annually by the Entrepreneurs Association of India (EAI), the summit is a premier national platform celebrating entrepreneurship and innovation.

This recognition highlights the IIIM incubator’s significant contributions to fostering innovation, supporting startups, and promoting entrepreneurship in the Jammu and Kashmir region.

Dr. Zabeer Ahmed, Director of CSIR-IIIM and Chairman of IIIM-TBI, expressed pride in the institute’s dedicated efforts, stating that CSIR-IIIM is tirelessly supporting startups in critical sectors such as agri-tech, nutrition, healthcare, phytopharma, aroma, and biotechnology. “This award validates our unwavering commitment to fostering innovation and accelerating economic growth in Jammu and Kashmir,” he said.

Dr. Ahmed credited the achievement to the visionary leadership of Dr. Jitendra Singh, Hon’ble Union Minister of Science and Technology



& Vice President of CSIR. He further noted that the startup revolution in India has gained remarkable momentum under Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s ‘Start-up India, Stand-up India’ initiative. “Changing mindsets and utilizing local resources are the keys to startup success in Jammu and Kashmir,” Dr. Ahmed emphasized.

During the ceremony, Dr. Saurabh

Saran, Senior Principal Scientist at CSIR-IIIM and Principal Investigator of IIIM-TBI, outlined the incubator’s operations, which currently include three centres: BioNEST Incubator at CSIR-IIIM Jammu, BioNEST Incubator at Industrial Biotech Park, Kathua, and the Atal Incubation Centre at IIIM Branch, Srinagar. Under Dr. Ahmed’s guidance, these

centres have supported over 125 startups, with more than 20 successfully launching products in the market. Dr. Saran also highlighted the incubator’s focus on thematic areas such as the Aroma Mission, phytopharmaceuticals, and livelihood-linked innovations.

The event was graced by Chief Guest Shri Sardar Manjinder Singh Sirsa, Hon’ble Minister of Industries, Food Supplies, Environment, Forest and Wildlife, Government of NCT Delhi. Other dignitaries included Mr. Manoj Kumar Singh, former Chief Secretary of Uttar Pradesh, and senior members of the EAI including Mr. Arun Kumar Sharma, Mr. Amitabh Verma, Mr. Vikas Preetam, and Mr. Abhishek Kumar, President of EAI.

The Bharat Entrepreneurship Summit 2025 served as a pioneering platform to foster collaboration and innovation among entrepreneurs nationwide, with a special focus on empowering youth, farmers, and women through entrepreneurship.

CSIR-IIIM Technology Business Incubator expressed sincere gratitude to the Entrepreneurs Association of India for this national recognition and reaffirmed its commitment to advancing science-led entrepreneurship, promoting social progress, and actively nurturing a vibrant startup ecosystem that drives sustainable economic growth across the Jammu and Kashmir region.

Kashmiri Pandits victims of both Genocide & Democide: Dr. Mahesh Kaul

THE CHANCELLOR DESK
JAMMU

While speaking at the one-day consultative workshop on “Constitutional Reforms and Marginalized Groups: A Socio-Legal Analysis in Reorganized Jammu and Kashmir”, Dr. Mahesh Kaul, an authority on the Northern Frontiers, National Security Expert, an eminent author and columnist stated that the religiously cleansed Kashmiri Pandits are victims of both Genocide and Democide.

The workshop was organized by the Department of Law, University of Jammu under the aegis of the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR)-sponsored research project. Workshop com

prised of three technical sessions devoted exclusively to the issues of the marginalised communities that included the displaced people



of Jammu and Kashmir right from 1947 to 1990, tribal groups and gender sensitive issues. The undercurrent of the workshop was to underline the policy paralysis that has retarded the empowerment of the marginalised groups and communities in Jammu and Kashmir even after the neutralisation of Article 370 and 35A.

The opening session was chaired by Prof. Arvind Jasrotia who heads

the ICSSR sponsored project, Prof. Manju Jamwal, Head, Department of Law, University of Jammu.

In his presentation on the plight of the internally displaced Kashmiri Pandit community, Dr. Mahesh Kaul, said “There is an immediate need to do the course correction if the policy makers want to empower the internally displaced Kashmiri Pandit community and the initial step is the correct usage of the term

to define these people who are the victims of genocide in their own homeland and within the boundaries of their nation-India. And that course correction lies in stopping the usage of word migrant to define them. As this word is not an apt term to define these hapless people. Kashmiri Pandits are not migrant laborers or a social group that has left their homes and homeland for livelihood issues nor are they the victims of the natural calamities like floods and earthquakes. They are the victims of man-made persecution that is genocide inflicted on them by the indoctrinated radicalized terrorist organizations and their overground supporters in the social and political set up who ensured that this minuscule minority of Kashmir is uprooted and denied their right to life and limb for being the adherents of the Sanskrit civilizational moorings of the Indian nation in the Himalayas.”

GST REFORMS

MODI MAKES TAXES LIGHTER!

New tax slabs, lower rates on essentials • Rs 2.5 lakh crore in expected citizen savings

THE CHANCELLOR NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in a televised address to the nation on the eve of Navratri, announced the formal rollout of the Next Generation GST Reforms, set to take effect from September 22. The Prime Minister called the initiative a "GST Bachat Utsav" — a nationwide savings festival that promises substantial financial relief for citizens and businesses.

Extending festive greetings, PM Modi said, "From the first day of Navratri, India is taking a major stride in economic empowerment and Aatmanirbhar Bharat. These GST reforms will make daily life easier, spur business activity, and unlock growth for every state in the country."

Recalling the 2017 launch of GST as a milestone that replaced a web of taxes like Octroi, VAT, Excise, and Service Tax, the Prime Minister cited an example from 2014: "A company found it easier to ship goods from Bengaluru to Europe and then to Hyderabad than to navigate India's tax maze."

He said such inefficiencies caused loss to businesses and increased costs for citizens — especially the poor — and highlighted that the new reforms are the result of years of dialogue



with states and stakeholders.

Highlighting that 25 crore people have risen out of poverty in the last 11 years, the PM said this new segment has aspirations of a better life. With income up to Rs 12 lakh now tax-free and GST cuts on essentials, "every citizen can dream bigger and spend smarter — whether it's a bike, fridge, or hotel stay," he said.

Calling on citizens to "Buy Swadeshi, Sell Swadeshi," Modi urged Indians to reconsider their consumption habits:

"Do we even know if the comb in our pocket is made in India?" he asked.

He encouraged every home to become a hub of domestic products and appealed to state governments to support local industries, generate employment, and boost indigenous manufacturing.

The PM concluded with a message of unity and optimism:

"When the Centre and States move forward together, the dream of a developed, self-reliant India will become a reality."

He extended his Navratri greetings and congratulated citizens on the GST Bachat Utsav, which he said marks a new chapter in India's economic journey.

Key Highlights from the PM's Address:

Only 5% and 18% GST slabs retained:

Most goods and services previously taxed at 12% have been moved to the 5% bracket. Essential items like food, medicines, soap, toothpaste, and health insurance are now either tax-free or taxed at just 5%.

Citizens to save Rs 2.5 lakh crore annually:

The combined effect of income tax relief and GST reduction is expected to provide double benefits to consumers, especially the poor, middle class, and neo-middle class.

Big push for MSMEs:

The reforms simplify compliance for small businesses, reduce their tax burden, and encourage local manufacturing, aligning with the Swadeshi movement and Make in India goals.

'Nagarik Devobhava':

The PM said the reforms reflect a citizen-first approach. "This is why I call it a Bachat Utsav, a celebration of savings for every Indian household," he stated.

India to host Viksit Bharat run across 91 countries

Diaspora youth, local communities to participate in global initiative under 'Seva Pakhwada'

THE CHANCELLOR NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

In a major outreach initiative, the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports (MYAS), in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), will organise the Viksit Bharat Run 2025 across more than 150 locations in 91 countries. The event, being held under the Seva Pakhwada campaign (17 September to 2 October), aims to inspire collective action towards nation-building and strengthen global engagement with the Indian diaspora.

Scheduled primarily for September 28, the run will cover iconic global locations such as the Golden Gate Bridge (San Francisco), Angel of Independence (Mexico City), and a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Paramaribo (Suriname), among others.

With the tagline "Run to Serve the Nation," the 3–5 km community run is being organised for the first time at this scale. It will bring together Indian



nationals, diaspora youth, local citizens, students, professionals, and friends of India to reaffirm their commitment to the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047.

As part of the event, participants will take the Viksit Bharat Pledge and the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Pledge, plant saplings under the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' initiative, and register on the MY Bharat

portal to engage in future youth-led initiatives.

Officials said that the event is being designed as more than just a run—it is a platform for youth mobilisation, environmental awareness, and a celebration of India's values of Seva (service) and sustainability.

Indian Missions abroad will collaborate with community organisations, cultural groups, and local bodies to organise the event, which will also feature participation from local dignitaries and leaders.

Following the run, each Mission will upload photos and videos on the MY Bharat portal, contributing to a shared digital archive of this global campaign.

The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports said that Viksit Bharat Run 2025 is expected to be one of India's largest international outreach programmes, highlighting the country's development journey and connecting it to a global audience through fitness, community service, and national pride.

MiG-21 was a ‘Bird of All Seasons: Rajnath Singh

- Hails MiG-21’s role in shaping IAF legacy ● Decommissioning held at Chandigarh, where MiG-21’s India journey began in 1963
- Over 850 MiG-21s served IAF, proving their mettle across every conflict theatre

THE CHANCELLOR NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH

“The legacy of the MiG-21 will live on in India’s pursuit of self-reliance in defence,” said Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday, as he presided over the ceremonial decommissioning of the Indian Air Force’s (IAF) iconic MiG-21 aircraft in Chandigarh.

Addressing a packed gathering of senior military leaders, air warriors, veterans and dignitaries, Singh described the MiG-21 not merely as a combat machine, but as a symbol of India’s rise in military aviation. “The aircraft represents the continuity of courage, discipline and patriotism that will inspire the development of indigenous defence platforms such as the LCA Tejas and the upcoming Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA),” he said.

The decommissioning ceremony marked the end of an era that began more than six decades ago with the induction of the MiG-21 in 1963. The Defence Minister paid glowing tribute to the aircraft’s long service history, highlighting its decisive role in multiple operations including the 1971 war, Kargil conflict, the Balakot airstrike, and Operation Sindoor.

“In every historic mission, the MiG-21 carried the Tricolour with honour. Its contribution has never been limited to a single event or battle, it has been a steadfast shield of India’s skies,” Singh said.

The Minister praised the aircraft’s



versatility, calling it a “bird of all seasons” that served effectively as an interceptor, ground-attack platform, frontline air defence jet and trainer aircraft. He said generations of India’s fighter pilots were trained on the MiG-21, which shaped the very foundation of India’s air strategy for decades.

From its first induction into No. 28 Squadron — famously called ‘First Supersonics’ — the MiG-21 played a pivotal role in changing the IAF’s capabilities, he added. “This soil in Chandigarh has witnessed a glorious chapter that redefined India’s air power. Today, history comes full circle as we bid farewell to the same aircraft from the same place.”

The Defence Minister pointed out that more than 11,500 MiG-21s were built worldwide, with approximately 850 serving with the IAF — a testament to its popularity and operational credibility. “It taught us never to fear change, but to embrace it with confi-

dence,” Singh noted. “Today, India’s defence ecosystem — from research labs and academia to startups and DPSUs — is working together to take this legacy forward.”

Responding to concerns over the age of the aircraft, Singh clarified that the MiG-21s flying until now were not the same as those inducted in the 1960s and ’70s. “Those older models were retired long ago. The ones in service were no more than 40 years old — a normal life span for fighter jets globally,” he said.

He credited the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) for continuously upgrading the platform with advanced avionics, radars and weapon systems, allowing it to remain combat-ready and relevant for decades. The jet underwent several upgrades and was known in its final iterations as Bison, Trishul, Vikram and Badal — each name signifying its evolving edge.

The event was marked by a ceremonial switch-off of six MiG-21 aircraft in front of dignitaries, symbolising the formal end of operational service. Officers and airmen from 23 and 28 Squadrons handed over the final aircraft documents — Form-700 — to the Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal AP Singh.

A stunning flypast followed, featuring formation take-offs by MiG-21s, a joint flyover with LCA Tejas jets, and aerial displays by the Surya Kiran Aerobatic Team. Skydivers from the Akash Ganga team also performed, underlining the ceremonial significance of the moment. A symbolic flypast of Jaguars

and MiG-21s recreated a Combat Air Patrol to showcase the historical legacy of the MiG-21 in real-time.

A commemorative postage stamp and special cover were also released to honour the aircraft’s service.

Drawing from India’s civilisational values, Singh said the farewell was not just a military formality but a cultural act of reverence. “Our ancient philosophy teaches us that divinity exists even in non-living objects. Just as we revere the earth, rivers and tools of our trade, today we express our gratitude to a machine that protected our skies and served our people with distinction for over 60 years,” he said.

The Minister likened the event to the rituals performed on Dussehra when weapons are worshipped, saying, “This is not just a retirement ceremony. It is our way of saluting the soul of a warrior that has lived with us.”

The event saw the presence of Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi, Chief of the Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi, DRDO Chairman Dr. Samir V Kamat, Financial Advisor (Defence Services) Dr. Mayank Sharma, and other senior defence officials.

Veterans who had flown, maintained and commanded the MiG-21 across different eras also attended, alongside engineers, technicians, and ground staff. A visit to the ‘Memory Lane’ museum was organised, followed by a ceremonial ‘Bara Khana’ with serving and retired personnel.

Mata Vaishno Devi Yatra resumes after weather halt

Registration restarts at Base Camp

THE CHANCELLOR DESK
KATRA

The pilgrimage to the cave shrine of Mata Vaishno Devi in Jammu and Kashmir resumed on September 18 morning, after a brief suspension on September 17 evening due to inclement weather.

The yatra, which had already seen a 22-day halt following heavy rainfall and a landslide near the Trikuta Hills in Reasi district, was finally reopened on September 17 morning. However, worsening weather led authorities to suspend it again later in the evening, officials said.

With conditions improving, registration for the yatra restarted, and the pilgrimage is now progressing smoothly, officials confirmed.

The Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) has also issued advisories for pilgrims wishing to use helicopter services, urging them to book their chopper tickets in advance.

Officials said that 2,500 pilgrims were allowed to proceed during brief window on September 17 before the second suspension. The SMVDSB reiterated that the yatra would remain subject to weather conditions, and all safety protocols are being followed.

‘Make every home a Swadeshi hub’: Amit Shah to citizens

THE CHANCELLOR NEWS DESK
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday called on citizens to embrace indigenous products in their everyday lives, echoing Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s recent appeal to the nation.

Shah highlighted that the upcoming Next-Gen GST reforms will play a pivotal role in advancing India’s vision of a self-reliant economy. He noted that in his address, PM Modi emphasized the importance of adopting ‘Swadeshi’ and explained how the GST overhaul will strengthen the country’s journey toward self-sufficiency.

To further support domestic manufacturing, GST rates have been reduced in key sectors including agriculture, healthcare, textiles, and man-made fibers.

“Make indigenous products a part of your daily routine, turn every home into a symbol of Swadeshi, and contribute to building a self-reliant India,” Shah urged in a Hindi post on ‘X’ with the hashtag #GSTBachatUtsav.

In his national address on the eve of Navratri, which coincides with the launch of the revised GST rates, PM Modi asserted that Swadeshi products will empower India’s prosperity just as they fueled the country’s freedom struggle.



Cabinet approves major expansion of medical education seats across India

10,000 addl Medical seats sanctioned under CSS • 5,000 PG & 5,023 MBBS Seats to Be Added in Govt Medical Colleges by 2028

THE CHANCELLOR NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

In a significant move aimed at strengthening India's healthcare workforce, the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the third phase of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for expanding postgraduate and undergraduate medical education capacity in government institutions across the country.

According to a statement issued by the Press Information Bureau (PIB), the Cabinet has cleared the expansion of 5,000 postgraduate (PG) medical seats and 5,023 undergraduate (MBBS) seats in existing State and Central Government Medical Colleges, standalone postgraduate institutes, and government hospitals. The initiative will be implemented with an enhanced cost ceiling of Rs 1.5 crore per seat.

The total financial outlay for these initiatives is estimated at Rs 15,034.50 crore for the period 2025-26 to 2028-29, of which the central share amounts to



Rs 10,303.20 crore and the state share stands at Rs 4,731.30 crore.

The schemes aim to add a total of 10,023 medical seats—5,000 PG and 5,023 UG—by the year 2028-29. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) will issue detailed implementation guidelines in due course.

Achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) for India's 1.4 billion population depends on a robust and well-distributed healthcare system.

Central to this is the availability of a skilled and adequate health workforce.

India currently has 808 medical colleges, the highest number in the world, with an annual intake of 1,23,700 MBBS students. Over the past decade, the country has added 69,352 MBBS seats (a 127% increase) and 43,041 PG seats (a 143% increase). Despite this, certain regions continue to face shortages, underscoring the need for further expansion.

The new initiatives also align with broader efforts such as the establishment of 22 new All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) under the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY), which are not only providing tertiary care but also contributing to the development of a highly skilled healthcare workforce.

Additionally, the recently introduced Medical Institution (Qualifications of Faculty) Regulations, 2025 adopt a more inclusive and competency-based approach to faculty recruitment—an important step towards expanding the pool of qualified medical educators.

The Cabinet's approval of these schemes marks a strategic investment in the country's health infrastructure and human resources. By scaling up both undergraduate and postgraduate capacity in government institutions, the government aims to make healthcare more accessible, affordable, and equitable for all citizens, while also reinforcing India's position as a global hub for quality and affordable healthcare services.

India, Australia seal deal on organic products

• Organic Trade Pact

THE CHANCELLOR
NEW DELHI

In a move set to boost organic trade and deepen economic ties, India and Australia have signed a Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) for organic products. The agreement was formalized at Vaniya Bhavan, New Delhi, marking a significant step forward in the India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (Ind-Aus ECTA).

The MRA reflects the growing strategic partnership between the two countries and recognizes the equivalence of each other's organic certification systems. It aims to reduce trade barriers, simplify compliance processes, and open new markets for organic producers, processors, and exporters in both nations.

The arrangement was signed in the presence of Shri Sunil Barthwal, Commerce Secretary; Sh. Abhishek Dev, Chairman, APEDA; Mr. Tom Black, First Assistant Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), Australia;



and other senior officials and organic industry stakeholders.

Key Highlights:

- India and Australia sign Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) for Organic Products
- MRA signed under the framework of India-Australia ECTA
- Covers unprocessed plant products, processed plant-based foods, and wine
- Implemented by APEDA (India) and DAFF (Australia)
- Aims to simplify certification, reduce trade barriers, and boost organic exports
- India's organic exports to Australia stood at USD 8.96 million in FY

- 2024-25
- MRA expected to benefit Indian farmers with premium prices and better market access
 - Australia is home to 53 million hectares of organic farmland – the largest globally
 - Strengthens India's vision of becoming the Organic Food Basket of the World

Scope of the Arrangement

The MRA applies to:

- Unprocessed plant products (excluding seaweed, aquatic plants, and greenhouse crops)
- Processed food products of plant origin (including certified organic ingredients from third countries processed in India or Australia)
- Wine

This recognition enables products certified organic in one country to be sold as organic in the other, without the need for recertification, as long as they meet agreed standards.

Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal highlighted the robustness of India's National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP) and underscored that organic certifica-

tion is more than a label—it's a commitment to integrity, sustainability, and farmer welfare. He emphasized higher income potential for farmers, with organic produce fetching 30-40% premium prices, and called for stricter regulation, labelling, and capacity building to uphold organic integrity.

Tom Black, First Assistant Secretary, DAFF, praised the rapid growth of India's organic sector and acknowledged the role of the Indian diaspora in driving organic demand in Australia. He noted that Australia's vast organic farming base offers immense scope for enhanced bilateral trade in categories like cereals, tea, spices, beverages, and wines.

India exported 2,781.58 metric tonnes of organic products to Australia in FY 2024-25, led by psyllium husk, coconut milk, and rice. With certification systems now recognized mutually, this volume is expected to grow substantially.

The Government of India reiterated its commitment to position the country as the "Organic Food Basket of the World", and the MRA is seen as a foundational step towards that vision.

The CHANCELLOR

EDITORIAL

Great Game in Ladakh

The violence that brought turbulence on the streets of Ladakh was not spontaneous. The political simmering that has gripped Ladakh after the neutralization of Article 370 and 35A must be carefully analyzed to internalize the destabilization that has brought the life to standstill in India's Northern Frontiers. The fundamental question that comes to mind while witnessing this political violence is that the aspirations of the Ladakhi people were defined from the very inception after the India's independence by the demand for the Union Territory (UT) Status and for achieving this socio-political objective the people of this region suffered immensely and offered numerous sacrifices. Generations of activists and students from various segments of the society participated in this movement to uphold the national interest by asking New Delhi to mainstream Ladakh and free it from the forces of subversion and fissiparous tendencies so that political alienation of its people is stopped and they are treated at par with their counterparts in the rest of India. It is an open secret that the people of Ladakh were feeling discriminated against and exploited by the political narrative of the Kashmir valley. As they felt their voices were being lost in the din. The main reason being that there was a total difference in their aspirations both politically and socially with respect to Kashmir. Especially the archives of the last 35-40 years reveal that the political activists of Ladakh sought alliances with the nationalist forces in Jammu and Kashmir and worked for the political reorganization of the erstwhile princely state. A socio-political initiative that grabbed the attention of the people in Jammu and Kashmir in late 1990's was known as People's Initiative for Peace and Unity (PIPU). This consisted of their main socio-political voices demanding the quadripartition of the state. The constituents of the PIPU were Ladakh Buddhist Association (LBA), Jammu Joint Students Federation (JJSF) and Panun Kashmir (PK). LBA demanded UT status for Ladakh, JJSF stood for the statehood to Jammu region and PK has been voicing the demand for the carving out Homeland for religiously cleansed Kashmiri Pandits in Kashmir respectively. What brought these forces together was the centuries of alienation and discrimination guided by genocidal attrition. If the aspirations were addressed in August 2019, then what has led to the destabilization that has rocked Ladakh? The answer is simple but can be internalized by the people who have an ear to the ground and are well aware about the pincer movements that are being carried out in the Himalayas to weaken the Indian defence. That is why the readers are being reminded about the PIPU that was initiated in the 1990's to sensitize the nation and mobilize the national opinion that what is happening in Jammu and Kashmir in terms of political subversion is not an isolated incident. International forces are making pincer movements to dismantle the Northern Frontiers of India. And in this direction these forces working for the balkanization of India started the De-Sanskritization movements to uproot the aboriginal inhabitants in all the three regions of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. At this moment we are concerned about the De-Sanskritization in Ladakh. Though it has a cumulative effect in all the three regions. It cannot be ruled out that a Great Game has been going on in Ladakh from pre-independence days when the British imperialists were busy in playing the geo-strategic games in the frontier. It invited other players to this frontier and made the Indian defence vulnerable. Forces of expansionism increased their games in this region and the outcome is that both China and America are playing on the turf of Ladakh to unhinge the Northern Frontiers of India extending their tentacles down to Arunachal Pradesh. What we are witnessing today is the unfolding of the Great Game 2.0 being played in the Himalayas. There is definite effort to De-Sanskritise the Buddhist Himalayas and this can have close correlation with the instability in Nepal. What adds to the challenge is that the thrust is to strangle and shrink the Indian influence across the trans-Himalayan regions. Don't forget the One Belt One Road (OBOR) that has already penetrated the Himalayas. Chinese influence in Tibet and its expansion there needs to be carefully studied and decoded. Presence of the Dalai Lama in India and the Indian stand on Tibetan human rights has always shaped the frontier policy. Now when the political approach and the narrative of Tibet is witnessing dilution due to Chinese pressure India needs to revisit its Tibet policy so that the Northern Frontier is safeguarded. Role of the United States cannot be ruled out. India cannot afford to keep its policy to uphold the Northern Frontiers hostage to the American and Chinese designs as doing that will have direct bearing on the Sanskrit Himalayas.

World Tourism Day | 27th September

Sustainable & Transformative Power of Tourism



DR. MAHESH KAUL

Tourism has emerged as one of the most effective businesses that has defined the economy and multiplier effect in a comprehensive manner, making the understanding of the markets more scientific and more sensitive. The evolution of the tourism sector has led to social development, educational initiatives, employment generation and creation of new opportunities that have wide spread across many sectors. It is an open secret that tourism is an all-encompassing sector as it depends upon many peripheral industries. Thus, making it the nucleus on which many sectors and industries thrive. Expansion and development of the tourism sector have led to opening of many new dimensions that demand redressal for the successful and comprehensive development of this sector so that a more professional element is added with a focus on local sensitivities. This has prompted the tourism marketers and policy makers to adopt an inclusive approach that gives prominence to sustainability, resilience and social equity. As these factors correspond to the core of tourism development and decision-making process.

World Tourism Day that is celebrated on 27th September is an occasion meant to introspect and take stock of the global happenings in terms of tourism development and various challenges being faced by the tourism sectors and the direction that is being taken by tourism as an international business. The World Tourism Organization (WTO) takes the lead in defining the policy contours and the way forward every year to infuse a

stimulus to keep the tourism industry on track and in sync with global economic conditions. So that the industry is able to cope up with the challenges that emerge from time to time.

This year the theme for the World Tourism Day is "Tourism and Sustainable Transformation" meant to highlight the transformative potential of tourism and so that its potential as the positive agent of change is underlined across the globe. The major campaign is led by the World Tourism Organization (WTO) through its official website and various digital platforms. It encourages the members to share the events organized in various locations across the globe enabling the tourism enthusiasts and policy makers to contribute towards building a viable tourism development ecosystem.

The concept note issued by the World Tourism Organization (WTO) on the occasion of the World Tourism Day 27th September, 2025 underlines the various policy initiatives and approaches that need to be adopted to adhere to this year's theme "Tourism and Sustainable Transformation". Substantiating the transformative potential of tourism as a whole, the concept note issued from Melaka, Malaysia underlines, "World Tourism Day 2025 highlights tourism's transformative potential as an agent of positive change. Realizing this potential, however, demands more than growth alone. It requires good governance, strategic planning, robust monitoring and clear priority setting that align with long-term sustainability goals. Tourism is more than an economic sector, it is a catalyst for social progress, delivering education, employ-

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ment and creating new opportunities for all. To unlock these benefits, a deliberate and inclusive approach is essential, one that places sustainability, resilience and social equity at the core of tourism development and decision-making." As rightly underlined that tourism is not merely an economic sector but a catalyst for social progress that enables the delivery of education, employment and creating new opportunities for all. Thus it needs an inclusive approach so that various areas that are influenced by tourism are addressed and stock is taken of the current situation. The aim is to give prominence to sustainability and this can happen when multiple areas and factors that shape the tourism business are identified and included in the decision-making. The slow pace of tourism development in various nations can be clearly attributed to the non-inclusion of various sectors that have an impact on tourism business but are not identified and included in the policy making. Thus making it devoid of an important input that can be a game changer for the tourism business in that geographical area.

Tourism sustainability and the transformative potential are inter-related. It is indeed the ingrained element of sustainability that enables the tourism sector to inject transformation in the society. While focusing on the transformative potential through tourism sustainability focus must be on social transformation that does not erode the cultural moorings and civilisational values shaping the local ecosystem, place consciousness and aesthetics. As the violation of these elements leads to social erosion and once this erosion takes place then tourism loses its sanctity. After tourism is meant to showcase the original habitat and social practices that make a destination unique and valued.

This concept note delves at length on the achievement of the sustainable transformation with a global outlook. To bring home this point, it emphasises, "Sustainable tourism transformation must begin with effective governance and people-centric planning. Investment in education and skills, especially for youth, women, and communities at risk of exclusion is crucial. Despite tourism's growth potential, nearly half of young people in emerging destinations lack adequate training to participate effectively. To bridge this gap, governments and stakeholders must make accessible, high-quality educational programmes and vocational training a priority. These should be tailored to the evolving needs of the tourism sector and empowering individuals to excel and contribute meaningfully to our collective progress." Indeed, governance issues are a concern. There have been multiple challenges in the developing nations that act as impediments towards tourism development.

WORLD TOURISM DAY 2025

TOURISM AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSFORMATION

The bureaucratic hindrance based on ignorance of the professional aspects of tourism has led to an inertia as the involvement of the qualified tourism professionals is the need of the hour. If civil services and engineering services are designed for the public good then there is an urgent need in nations like India to establish a cadre on the lines of the Indian Tourism Service. A general administrative cadre cannot cater to the intangible tourism business. The silver lining is visible in the form of tourism professional human resources who are trained every year from the various universities and colleges with professional Masters in Tourism Management (MTM) degree and the Masters in Business Management (MBA) Hospitality and Tourism degrees. The need is to integrate these professionals in the tourism policy making so that their professional expertise is used to develop new tourism development models and this can be achieved only when the policy imperative is to create a cadre giving entry to these professionals through Indian Tourism Service (ITS). It will create a model tourism professional administrative service across the nation and it will make the difference relieving the tourism sector from the strains of the generalised civil services that have failed to deliver in case of tourism.

The concept note emphatically underscores that tourism must also be powered by strategic innovation and responsible entrepreneurship. Digitalization and innovative business models present immense opportunities. Thus, supporting MSMEs and startups, especially those led by women and youth, can significantly contribute to inclusive prosperity and sustainable economic diversification. This is indeed the requirement of the emerging market scenario that demands the incorporation of technological advancement and the empowering of the marginalised groups that include women and youth who have been deprived the rational share in the tourism entrepreneurship due to



lack of policy premise meant to keep the tourism sector vibrant with innovation and new ideas.

Investment and financial constraints make a significant difference when it comes to promoting the tourism business as sustainable investments are also a powerful lever for transformation. Between 2019 and 2024, the sector attracted over 2,300 greenfield FDI projects, representing USD 126 billion in investment. However, investments must prioritize long-term community benefits, resilience building and climate action. Investments must be smarter and more sustainable. Guided by the UN Tourism Principles of Sustainable Tourism Investment, public and private stakeholders must collaborate to align growth with climate goals, social impact and innovation. These observations made in the concept note are worth internalisation to shape the futuristic tourism business planning models in the developed nations so that they are in sync with their counterparts in the developed nations.

Policy making needs to give thrust to ownership issues and generate accountability. In this connection this year's concept note for future generations makes a relevant observation

by making it clear that Responsible stewardship of natural resources is another core element. Tourism stakeholders must proactively address their impact by significantly reducing emissions, conserving biodiversity and investing in resilient infrastructure to safeguard our natural resources and ecosystems and ensure resource availability.

This years World Tourism Day celebrations are indeed markedly different as the global upheaval in terms of conflict and economic embargo posed by the United States (US) in terms of tariff war must make well meaning organisations ponder over the way out so that tourism business is insulated from these isolationist tactics. In this connection, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has made it abundantly clear that Tourism is a powerful driver of transformation. It creates jobs, fuels local economies, and builds bridges across cultures. Yet, it must be sustainable to protect the very places and communities it celebrates. Let's harness tourism as a force for resilience, sustainability, and shared progress. This is indeed an inclusive message to bridge gaps and enable brotherhood through tourism business.

On the same lines the statement of UN Tourism Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili is again significant when he says that World Tourism Day 2025 in Melaka has shown the world that tourism can be a force for good when guided by sustainability and inclusivity. By working together, we can transform tourism into a tool for empowerment, cultural preservation, and environmental protection. Let us hope that tourism will emerge as the harbinger of international cooperation and brotherhood with an aim to safeguard the local heritage and work for the sustainable development of the local ecosystems for a better and secure human present and future on the planet Earth.

(Author is Editorial Director, The Chancellor)



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India's food startups are driving a revolution, says PM

World Food India 2025 highlights surge in tech adoption & farmer producer organizations.

THE CHANCELLOR NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

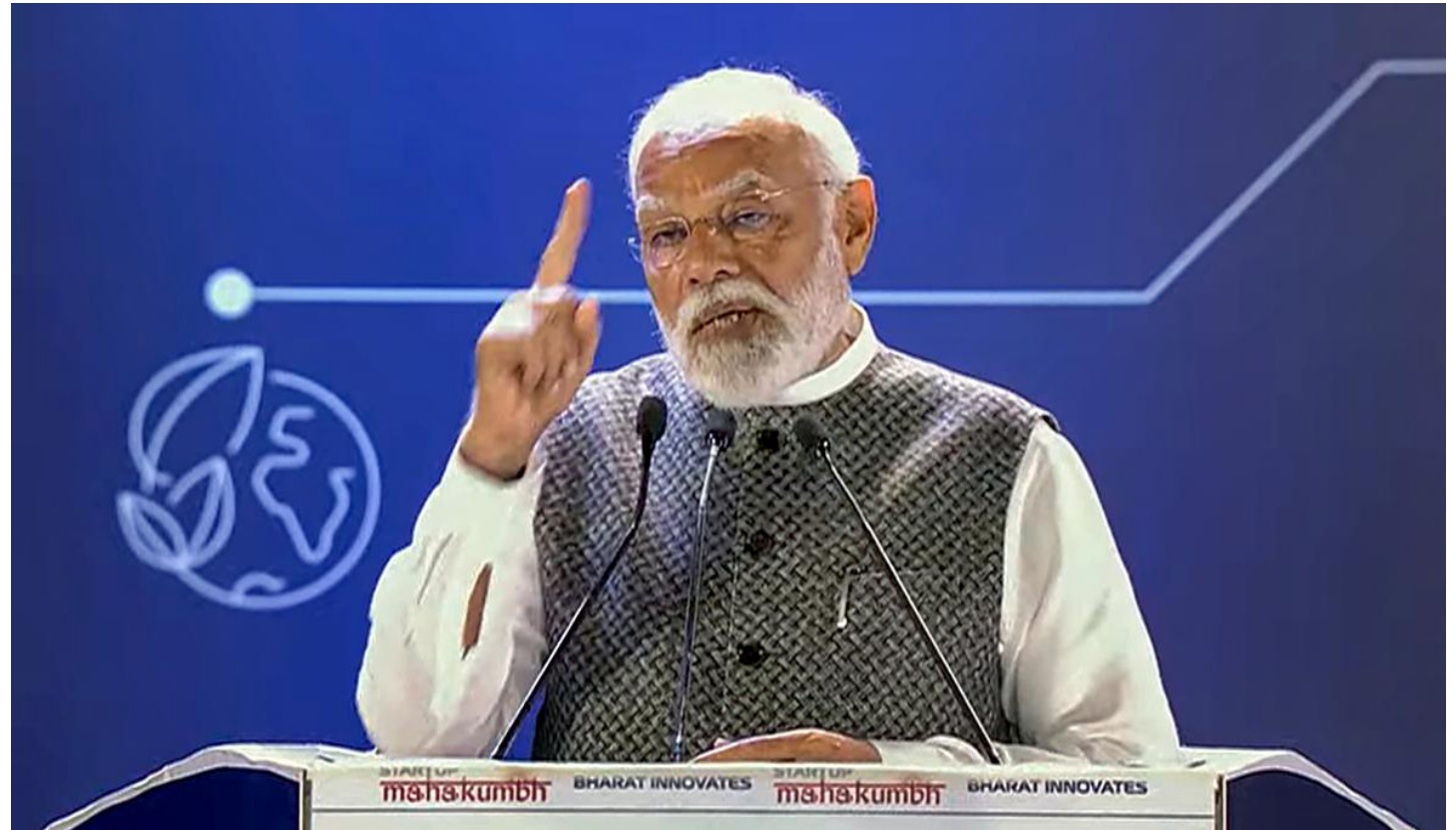
Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said India's dynamic startup ecosystem is playing a pivotal role in transforming the agriculture and food processing sectors, integrating innovation and tradition to reshape the country's food economy. Speaking at the inaugural session of World Food India 2025 at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi, the Prime Minister said technology and entrepreneurship are becoming critical enablers in India's journey toward becoming a global food hub.

Highlighting India's position as the world's third-largest startup ecosystem, Modi said that many of these startups are innovating across the food and agriculture value chains by deploying artificial intelligence, drones, mobile applications, and e-commerce platforms. These new-age ventures, he said, are not just increasing efficiency but also creating direct market linkages for farmers and producers.

The Prime Minister underlined that small and marginal farmers, who form over 85 percent of India's farming population, are emerging as a major force in the market due to policy support and grassroots initiatives like Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) and Self-Help Groups (SHGs). Since 2014, over 10,000 FPOs have been established, enabling lakhs of farmers to access credit, upgrade processing capabilities, and bring their products to market with branding and scale.

Modi cited a number of regional success stories that have emerged from these grassroots collectives. Products like saffron and walnuts from Kashmir, jams and apple juice from Himachal Pradesh, millet cookies from Rajasthan, makhana from Bihar, peanut oil and jaggery from Maharashtra, and banana chips and coconut oil from Kerala are now available across India and beyond through online retail platforms. According to the Prime Minister, more than 1,100 FPOs have achieved annual turnovers exceeding Rs 1 crore, contributing not only to increased farmer incomes but also to employment generation in rural areas.

Stating that India is fast emerging as a global leader in food and agriculture, Modi said the country possesses a unique combination of diversity, demand, and scale. He pointed out that India produces nearly every kind



of grain, fruit and vegetable, and that the nation's culinary traditions vary every few hundred kilometres, offering enormous variety. This domestic demand, he said, along with rising incomes and aspirations, is attracting significant interest from global investors in the food sector.

Referring to broader structural shifts in Indian society, the Prime Minister said that over 25 crore people have risen out of poverty in the last ten years, forming a new aspirational middle class that is driving consumption patterns. Their demand for nutritious, packaged, and value-added food products is reshaping market dynamics, he said, and pushing the industry toward higher quality standards and innovation.

Touching upon India's contribution to global food security, Modi noted that the country is the world's largest milk producer, accounting for a quarter of global output, and is also the leading producer of millets. India ranks second in rice and wheat production, and its fisheries and horticulture sectors are among the most productive globally. He said that whenever global food systems face disruptions, India steps up and fulfills its responsibilities.

Modi also underlined the government's efforts to modernise food storage, processing and distribution. He said the food processing sector has expanded nearly twentyfold in the last decade, aided by schemes such as Production Linked Incentives

(PLI), 100 percent FDI allowance, and the creation of mega food parks. Exports of processed food have more than doubled in this period, he said, noting that India is also implementing the world's largest food storage infrastructure programme.

The Prime Minister spoke at length about the role of cooperatives in strengthening the rural economy, especially in the dairy sector. He said the government had created a dedicated Ministry of Cooperation to develop policies tailored to this sector, along with reforms in taxation and transparency. These measures, he said, are helping cooperatives expand their reach and scale.

The fisheries and marine sector too, he said, has witnessed significant growth, with modern boats, smart harbours, and cold chain infrastructure leading to a surge in exports. This sector alone now supports nearly three crore livelihoods, Modi said, adding that investments in fish processing plants are creating new opportunities for coastal communities.

On the regulatory front, the Prime Minister announced that Next Generation GST reforms are underway to make agriculture and food processing more profitable. He said that items like butter, ghee and milk cans now attract only 5 percent GST, and more than 90 percent of processed food items are under the 0 to 5 percent tax bracket. He also highlighted that the GST on bio-pesticides and micronu-

trients has been reduced, directly benefiting organic farmers and FPOs.

Addressing sustainability concerns, Modi announced that the GST on biodegradable packaging materials has been reduced from 18 to 5 percent, calling on industry leaders to invest in eco-friendly innovations. He said maintaining food quality must go hand in hand with environmental responsibility.

Concluding his address, the Prime Minister reaffirmed India's openness to global investment and collaboration in the food and agriculture sectors. He said World Food India 2025 is not just a business event but a celebration of India's commitment to nutrition, sustainability, and innovation. "India is ready to lead the world in food processing and agricultural innovation," he said.

The event was attended by Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Patrushev, along with Union Ministers Chirag Paswan, Ravneet Singh, and Prataprao Jadhav, among other dignitaries.

The four-day event will see participation from 21 countries and more than 150 international delegates. It includes CEO roundtables, B2B and B2G meetings, technical sessions, and thematic exhibitions. Under the PM Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) scheme, credit-linked assistance of Rs 770 crore will be provided to 26,000 beneficiaries for micro projects worth over Rs 2,500 crore.



Dismantle terror ecosystem, says LG Sinha

- Chairs Unified HQ Meet • Says tackling drug menace & radicalisation part of security strategy
- 12 high-potential tourist sites to reopen from Sept 29 after security review

THE CHANCELLOR NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha chaired a high-level Unified Headquarters (UHQ) meeting at Raj Bhawan, Srinagar, to review the prevailing security scenario in Jammu and Kashmir and oversee operational readiness across agencies.

The meeting, attended by top Army, police, paramilitary, and intelligence brass, focused on sustaining momentum in anti-terror operations and safeguarding civilian life, especially ahead of the upcoming tourist season.

While congratulating security forces for recent successful counter-terror operations, LG Sinha warned that the war against terrorism in the Union Territory is far from over. He emphasised the need to maintain aggressive kinetic and non-kinetic action against terror networks and their support systems.

“The fight against terrorism is ongoing. Kinetic and non-kinetic operations must continue with full force. We must maintain momentum and dismantle the entire ecosystem that supports terrorism,” the Lieutenant Governor told the senior security and civil officials.

During the meeting, LG Sinha directed the security apparatus to proactively adapt to evolving threats and ensure continuous improvement in intelligence coordination and on-ground readiness. Stressing a Whole-of-Government Approach, he instructed civil and security agencies



to coordinate efforts against radicalisation and the drug menace, which remain serious concerns for internal security.

Present in the meeting were Northern Army Commander Lt Gen Pratik Sharma, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, DGP Nalin Prabhat, GOCs of 15, 16, and 9 Corps, senior officers from Air Force, CRPF, JKP, CID, and Intelligence agencies, as well as Principal Secretary Home Chandraker Bharti and Principal Secretary to LG, Dr. Mandeep K. Bhandari.

Meanwhile, in a major announcement following the security review, LG Sinha ordered the reopening of 12 key tourist sites, 5 in Jammu Division and 7 in Kashmir Division, — that were closed earlier this year due to heightened threat perceptions following the April 22 terrorist attack on tourists in Pahalgam.

The reopening will be effective from September 29, marking a fresh attempt to revive tourism in sensitive but high-potential regions of the UT.

“Jammu and Kashmir possesses huge potential for tourism, and tour-

List of tourist sites cleared for reopening:

Kashmir Division:

- Aru Valley, Rafting Point Yanner,
- Akkad Park,
- Padshahi Park Bijbehara, and
- Dara Shikoh Garden in Anantnag
- Kaman Post & Eco-Park Khadniyar in Baramulla

Jammu Division:

- Dagan Top in Ramban
- Dhaggar in Kathua
- Chinkah, Shiv Cave (Salal) in Reasi
- Padri in Doda

ist safety remains a top priority. We are committed to offering a secure environment for travellers, alongside economic revival for local communities,” LG Sinha said.

These sites had been temporarily closed post-Pahalgam attack as a precautionary security measure to avoid public gatherings and safeguard both

locals and tourists in vulnerable areas.

The announcement has come as a relief to tourism operators, hotel owners, and local transporters, many of whom have suffered steep losses due to restricted activity during the summer season.

Local administrations have been instructed to coordinate with police and tourism offices to ensure the smooth, secure, and hassle-free reopening of these destinations.

Senior officials confirmed that security measures at the newly reopened spots have been intensified, with increased patrolling, CCTV surveillance, and local intelligence coordination. District-level task forces have been created to oversee safety, traffic management, and tourist assistance.

The Tourism Department, in collaboration with J&K Police, is also said to be preparing a site-specific SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) for each destination, taking into account terrain, past threats, and footfall projections.

NCERT to grant equivalence for Class 10 & 12 certificates across boards

THE CHANCELLOR DESK
JAMMU

The Government of India has issued a notification assigning the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) the responsibility of granting equivalence to Secondary (Class 10) and Senior Secondary (Class 12) certificates awarded by various School Education Boards in India. This equivalence will apply for admissions to higher education institutions and for employment

under the Central Government, State Governments, and Union Territories.

In a statement issued by PIB, it stated that in the e-Gazette published on 6th September 2025 by the Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education, this notification supersedes the earlier directive dated 15th November 2021, which had assigned this role to the Association of Indian Universities (AIU).

NCERT will exercise this responsibility through the National

Assessment Centre, Performance Assessment, Review and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development (PARAKH), established under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. This institutional framework will ensure that equivalence determinations are carried out through a robust, academically rigorous process, upholding the highest educational standards.

The new system applies to certificates issued by Central Government, State Government, and private Indian School Boards established by

Acts of Parliament or State legislatures, executive orders, statutory bodies, or recognised institutions mandated to do so. The notification ensures that equivalence granted by NCERT will be accepted as inter-se parity among Boards across India, thereby facilitating smooth migration of students between different School Education Boards.

This equivalence will be valid nationwide, promoting seamless transitions for students moving across School Education Boards for academic or employment purposes.



Experts call to integrate gender, climate, & peace in Himalayas

THE CHANCELLOR DESK

JAMMU

In a timely and urgent online dialogue held on International Peace Day, a distinguished group of academics, practitioners, and community leaders convened to address the complex and interconnected challenges of gender, climate change, and peacebuilding in the Himalayan region. The discussion underscored the pressing need for integrated, inclusive, and culturally sensitive approaches to tackle environmental vulnerabilities while promoting social justice and sustainable peace.

The session brought together a diverse panel of experts from across India's Himalayan belt—including Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand, Maharashtra, and West Bengal—as well as international voices from Israel, Kenya, and Germany. Notable participants included Dr. Renu Nanda, Dr. Neeraj Sharma, Dr. Shazia Malik, Anmol Ohri, Rinchen Angmo Chumikchan, Mani Mahesh Aurora, Deoashish Mothey, Sonika Bhasin, and Prof. Govardhan Wankhede. Faculty members from Punjab University Patiala, DAV College Jalandhar, and Himachal

Pradesh also contributed valuable insights. Representatives from the Learners' Ability Management Programme (LAMP) and Yakjah Reconciliation and Development Network further enriched the conversation, with contributions from Dr. Nymphae Saraf, Akshay Sharma, Arti Sharma, Ishrat Bukhari, Urzeeba Bhat, and Aamir Ganaie, among others.

Ashima Kaul, founder of Yakjah, framed the discussion by highlighting a critical concern: while women often serve as frontline stewards of mountain ecosystems, they frequently lack access to the resources, technology, training, and platforms necessary to influence conservation policies and programs effectively. “This gap limits the impact of their efforts and the sustainability of environmental initiatives,” she noted.

Hosted and anchored by Dr. Ana Bali from LAMP, the three-hour session delved deeply into how climate change acts as a threat multiplier, exacerbating existing inequalities and disproportionately affecting women, marginalized genders, and vulnerable communities in the Himalayan region. Participants agreed that climate justice forms the foundation of any lasting peacebuilding

effort in this ecologically fragile and culturally diverse landscape.

Key topics of discussion included the growing frequency of climate-induced disasters, water scarcity, and the fragile ecology in Ladakh, Kashmir, and surrounding states. The panelists emphasized the importance of grassroots-led community solutions such as afforestation, water conservation, and sustainable livelihoods, drawing on traditional knowledge and indigenous practices to foster resilience.

Education also emerged as a crucial area for reform. The experts advocated integrating climate literacy, peace education, and gender sensitization into school curricula to prepare future generations for the intertwined challenges of environmental degradation and social conflict. Empowering women, youth, third-gender individuals, and marginalized groups to take on leadership roles in decision-making was highlighted as vital for inclusive governance.

The dialogue also recognized the need to preserve cultural heritage and promote responsible tourism, ensuring that development respects and sustains the unique identities of

Himalayan communities.

As a result of the discussion, participants committed to advancing a series of follow-up initiatives, including offline sessions, collaborative research partnerships between universities and local communities, and advocacy for gender-sensitive disaster preparedness and inclusive policy frameworks. They pledged to support community-driven ecological preservation projects and promote peace education through meaningful curriculum reforms.

The event concluded with a shared conviction that peace cannot be separated from climate justice. Addressing climate change's disproportionate impacts on marginalized populations is essential for building equitable and sustainable peace in the Himalayan region.

Organized by Yakjah Reconciliation and Development Network and the Learners' Ability Management Programme (LAMP), this dialogue marks the beginning of a sustained collaborative effort to foster resilience, justice, and harmony across the Himalayas through continued dialogue and joint action.

For media inquiries, please contact: yakjah.network@gmail.com

India, Russia strengthen ties to expand agri trade

Shivraj Singh Chouhan meets Russian Dy PM to enhance agri tie

THE CHANCELLOR DESK

JAMMU

The Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan, today met with His Excellency Mr. Dmitry Patrushev, Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, at Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi.

During the meeting, both leaders held fruitful discussions on a wide range of topics of mutual interest, with a particular focus on deepening bilateral trade and cooperation in the agriculture sector. Key areas of dialogue included expanding agricultural trade, especially by increasing India's exports of agricultural products to Russia.

Welcoming the Russian Deputy Prime Minister, Shri Chouhan emphasized the strong mutual trust and understanding that have long defined the India-Russia partnership. He highlighted India's key agricultural priorities, including ensuring food security, improving farmer incomes,



and expanding access to safe and nutritious food for all.

Reaffirming India's commitment to the principle of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*—the world is one family—Shri Chouhan underscored the critical role of international collaboration in advancing farmer welfare and ensuring food security.

Mr. Dmitry Patrushev acknowledged the long-standing and robust cooperation between India and Russia across various sectors, particularly in agriculture. He expressed Russia's keen interest in further strengthening agricultural trade ties and proposed formalizing the partnership through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding.



dum of Understanding (MoU).

The discussions centered on enhancing bilateral collaboration in agriculture, focusing on achieving balanced trade and strengthening technical partnerships. The Indian delegation emphasized the need for improved market access for key Indian agricultural products in the Russian Federation and expressed optimism for the timely resolution of existing trade issues.

Both sides also agreed to deepen cooperation in academic exchange programs and scholarship opportunities for students. They also discussed exploring joint initiatives in seed traceability systems to promote

innovation and support technology-driven solutions in agriculture.

The meeting concluded with both nations reaffirming their shared commitment to strengthening collaboration in agricultural trade, education, research, and development, with the aim of fostering sustainable and inclusive growth in the sector.

The Russian delegation included Mr. Maksim Markovich, Deputy Minister of Agriculture; Denis Alipov, Ambassador of Russia to India; and Sergey Dankvert, Head of the Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance.

Representing India were Devesh Chaturvedi, Secretary, Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare; senior officials from the Ministry of External Affairs; Joint Secretaries from the International Cooperation (IC) and Plant Protection (PP) Divisions; the Trade Advisor; the Deputy Director General (Crop Sciences), DARE; and senior officials from the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD).



Harnessing Technology for a Safer Nation: Nityanand Rai

THE CHANCELLOR DESK
NEW DELHI

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) marked its 21st Formation Day today with a strong focus on harnessing technology to build a safer and more disaster-resilient India. The event, held in New Delhi, brought together experts, policymakers, and stakeholders committed to advancing disaster preparedness and response across the country.

Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest and highlighted the government's unwavering commitment to leveraging innovation and community participation in reducing disaster risks.

In his keynote address, Rai lauded Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's visionary 10-point agenda for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), introduced in 2016. He noted that this agenda continues to guide India and the global community towards building disaster-resilient societies. By incorporating this agenda into the country's disaster management framework, India has made significant strides in disaster preparedness and risk mitigation.

Highlighting the progress made, Rai informed that India currently has over one lakh trained Aapda Mitras (Disaster Volunteers), with 20% of them being women, known as Aapda Sakhis. In addition, under the Youth Aapda Mitra Scheme, an estimated 2.5 lakh young volunteers from premier institutions such as the NCC, NSS, Nehru Yuva Kendra, and Bharat



Scouts and Guides are being trained to further strengthen the country's disaster response capabilities.

In a statement issued by pib, Rai emphasised India's leadership role in leveraging technology for disaster management and reiterated the government's commitment, under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi and the guidance of Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah, to achieve the ambitious goal of zero casualties from disasters. He stressed the importance of delivering early warnings effectively to every corner of the country, ensuring preparedness at the grass-roots level.

The Minister outlined the government's vision for a resilient 21st-century India, stating that disaster management should go beyond mere survival. "It involves understanding disasters, learning from them, and transforming these challenges

into opportunities for building resilience," he said. He urged that disasters should be studied and harnessed as catalysts for innovation, preparedness, and sustainable development.

During the event, Shri Rai released several important knowledge products and guidelines aimed at strengthening disaster mitigation and preparedness across the nation. These included operational guidelines for the use of drones in disaster management, protocols for strengthening State Disaster Management Authorities, a compendium of NDMA case studies, reports on lightning safety campaigns, and creative educational materials such as the Little Chanakya Aur Aapda Se Bachav comic series. He also unveiled the Delhi Heat Action Plan 2025 implementation report and a practical guide developed in collaboration with RMI to promote the adoption of cool roofs in Indian cities.

Furthering the digital push, an MoU was announced between NDMA and the National e-Governance Division to enhance digital disaster preparedness and public outreach efforts.

A special photo exhibition was inaugurated as part of the event, showcasing NDMA's two decades of achievements and key initiatives in disaster risk reduction.

Shri Rajendra Singh, Member and Head of Department at NDMA, highlighted the critical role of technology while stressing that community participation and capacity building remain indispensable. He pointed out that emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data, and digital platforms are transforming disaster management to be faster and more precise. "NDMA's goal is to ensure timely warnings reach every citizen and empower communities to respond effectively," he said.

The event featured a technical session with experts, policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders who deliberated on the role of innovation and digital systems in enhancing disaster resilience and community safety.

The gathering was attended by NDMA Members and Secretary, former members, officials from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM), senior officials from Central and State Governments, representatives from UN and international agencies, private sector bodies, disaster management experts, academicians, NGOs, and other key stakeholders, all united in their shared commitment to building a safer and more disaster-resilient India.



Hero of Patusa: Remembering Sardar Chabeel Singh

DR. MADHULIKA SINGH

Sardar Chabeel Singh was a resident of the village Patusa, in Choor, located in the Baramulla district of Kashmir. On 22nd October 1947, the barbaric Trans-Indus Pashtun tribal raiders, aided and abetted by the Pakistani Army, entered Indian territory and unleashed a reign of terror in the frontier regions of Jammu and Kashmir.

Organised into lashkars (armed legions), these raiders advanced rapidly, spreading terror and destruction across numerous towns and villages. They targeted non-Muslim communities, where massacres of men, women, and children occurred. Women were abducted, and homes were looted of their valuables. Many, fearing dishonour at the hands of the raiders, chose to sacrifice themselves—jumping into rivers and wells in acts of unimaginable despair.

However, there are exemplary instances that reflected the valor and courage inhibited by the people, particularly the Sikh community, who laid down their lives to encourage the distressed people against the terror of Pakistan. The saga of Sardar Chabeel Singh of village Patusa of Baramulla district is worth mentioning. Chabeel



Singh, who had joined the State forces during world war II. This presumably gave him some familiarity with military and strategic tactics. As the

news of the advance of marauding raiders spread, he was apprehensive of such an attack in their region too. Soon his apprehensions turned out

to be true and as Chabeel Singh saw that the trucks and lorries packed with tribal raiders, guided by local co-religionists, had reached near village Choor, he anticipated the critical situation that was going to arise within no time.

Being army personnel with thorough strategic awareness, Chabeel Singh acted pragmatically and confronted the marauding raiders bravely. Without caring for his own life, he made a gallantry move and with the help of other community members, he snatched some chests of ammunition from them and made a successful attempt to destroy the whole truck of tribal invaders. In this, he got badly injured and before leaving for heavenly abode, he persuaded his wife to embrace death in order to safeguard her honour along with their infant child who was born after ten years of their married life. An exemplary courage and devotion reflected in the character of Chabeel Singh is unforgettable and deserves appreciation. His actions are credited with saving a number of people from what might otherwise would have been a catastrophe in the area by the Pakistani raiders.

(The Author is Associate Professor, Department of History, University of Jammu)

ACROSS THE NATION

PM Modi flags off phase-B expansion of IIT Jammu virtually

Rs 1,398 Cr sanctioned for IIT Jammu infrastructure boost • North India's first IIT Research Park coming up in Jammu

ANUJA KHUSHU

JAMMU

Prime Minister Narendra Modi today laid the foundation stone for Phase-B infrastructure works of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Jammu via virtual mode. Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology, Dr. Jitendra Singh, physically attended the ceremony at the institute's campus.

The expansion marks a major milestone for one of the country's third-generation IITs, established in 2016, as it moves to significantly scale its academic and research capacities.

Speaking at the event, Dr. Jitendra Singh lauded IIT Jammu's "remarkable progress" in under a decade, stating that the institute has "made a visible mark on the academic scene"

among the newer IITs.

"IIT Jammu has been a priority institution for the Government since its inception," the Minister said, adding that it was envisioned to fulfill the long-standing aspirations of the Jammu region for a premier technical institute.

Phase-A infrastructure, including academic blocks, lecture halls, hostels, dining facilities, and utility buildings, has already been completed. The new Phase-B expansion, sanctioned at a cost of Rs 1,398 crore, will include additional academic and residential buildings, laboratories, and a dedicated Research Park.

Dr. Singh highlighted that the upcoming Research Park — modelled on the IIT Madras facility — will be the first of its kind in North India. It aims to bolster industry-academia linkages,

foster startups, and support small and medium enterprises with technology-driven solutions.

Noting the institute's recent achievements, Dr. Singh pointed out that IIT Jammu was ranked 56th in the 2025 NIRF Engineering rankings — a significant feat for an institute less than a decade old.

He also underlined the locational advantage of IIT Jammu, which is in proximity to AIIMS, IIM Jammu, and the Central University of Jammu, offering strong opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration and research.

The Minister informed that the Union Cabinet has approved expansion plans across five new IITs — Tirupati, Bhilai, Dharwad, Jammu, and Palakkad — with a total investment of Rs 11,828 crore. This will enable the combined student strength of these institu-

tions to rise to nearly 12,000 over the next four years, along with enhanced faculty recruitment and state-of-the-art facilities.

Reflecting on the early challenges of setting up IIT Jammu, including recruitment of faculty and administrative leadership, Dr. Singh praised Director Prof. Manoj Singh Gaur and his team for their commitment and vision. "Under their stewardship, the institute has overcome initial hurdles and earned national recognition," he said.

Concluding his address, Dr. Singh expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Modi for his continued focus on Jammu and Kashmir's development. "The expansion of IIT Jammu reflects India's broader vision of becoming a global hub for research, education, and innovation," he said.



Religion and Spirituality in Hindu Thought: Outer Dharma and Inner Realization

S.K. KHUSHU

In everyday conversation, the words religion and spirituality are often used as if they mean the same thing. Yet, within the timeless wisdom of Hindu scriptures, they occupy different but complementary spheres of human life. To conflate the two is to miss their unique roles; to understand their difference is to glimpse the completeness of Sanatana Dharma.

Religion: The Sacred Framework of Dharma

If one seeks a Sanskrit equivalent for the word religion, it is Dharma. Derived from the root dhr—"that which upholds"—Dharma is not confined to a set of rituals or beliefs. It is the principle that sustains cosmic order, moral harmony, and human responsibility.

The Bhagavad Gita (4:7-8) proclaims:

"Yada yada hi dharmasya glanir bhavati Bharata, abhyutthanam adharmasya tadatmanam srjamyaham."

"Whenever there is a decline of dharma and a rise of adharma, I manifest Myself."

Religion in this sense is not a narrow sectarian code. It is the structured order of life—rituals, duties, customs, and ethical norms—through which society is preserved and individuals are guided. The Manusmṛti (1.108) even lists the qualities of Dharma: patience, forgiveness, self-control, non-stealing, purity, wisdom, truth, and freedom from anger. These are the outer scaffolding of religion—without which civilization collapses into chaos.

Religion, then, is the body of Sanatana Dharma. It provides form, culture, and continuity. But a body without soul is lifeless. That soul is spirituality.

Spirituality: The Inward Pilgrimage

Spirituality, or Adhyatma, is the journey within. Where religion speaks of duties and rituals, spirituality speaks of realization. It is not about belonging to a sect, but about awakening to one's true Self (Atman).

The Upanisads resound with this truth. "Tat tvam asi" (That Thou Art – Chandogya Upanisad 6.8.7) and "Aham Brahmasmi" (I am Brahman – Brhadaranyaka Upanisad 1.4.10) declare directly that the human soul is one with the Infinite. These mahavakyas bypass ritual and take the seeker straight to essence.

Thus, spirituality is universal,



intimate, and liberating. Where religion organizes, spirituality liberates. Where religion guides conduct, spirituality unveils consciousness.

Two Kinds of Knowledge: Scholarly and Transcendent

The Hindu tradition distinguishes between two kinds of knowledge—Apara Vidya (lower knowledge) and Para Vidya (higher knowledge). The Mundaka Upanisad (1.1.4-5) explains:

Apara Vidya is mastery of the Vedas, rituals, grammar, astronomy, logic, and philosophy—disciplines that demand intellectual effort and academic training.

Para Vidya is that knowledge by which the imperishable Reality is known.

This distinction is vital. To study the sastras, one needs sharp memory, discipline, even years of formal learning. But to walk the path of spirituality, no worldly qualification is required. A scholar may know the

Vedas by heart and still remain bound, while a humble devotee, surrendered at the feet of a realized Guru, may attain liberation.

The Katha Upanisad (1.2.23) makes it plain:

"Nayam atma pravacanena labhyo na medhaya na bahunā srutena; yam evaisa vṛnute tena labhyas tasyaisa atma vivṛnute tan m svam."

This Self cannot be attained by study, nor by intellect, nor by much learning. It is attained only by him whom the Self chooses. To such a one, the Self reveals Its true form."

Scholarship may sharpen the mind, but spirituality awakens the heart.

The Guru: Living Bridge Between the Two

Scriptures are like maps, but a map alone does not take one to the destination. The Guru is the living guide, the bridge between textual religion and living spirituality.

The Mundaka Upanisad (1.2.12)

declares:

"Tad vijñānārtham sa gurum evabhigacchet samit-panih srotriyam brahma-nistham."

"To know That, let the seeker approach a Guru who is well-versed in the scriptures and established in Brahman."

A true Guru combines both—mastery of Dharma and realization of Spirit. He knows the texts, but more importantly, embodies their essence. For the seeker, no academic degree is a prerequisite. The only qualifications are humility, devotion, and openness.

Religion and Spirituality: Body and Soul

Religion and spirituality are not rivals but complements. Religion offers outer discipline; spirituality provides inner freedom. Religion is the riverbed; spirituality is the flowing water. One without the other is incomplete.

Religion without spirituality can harden into dogma, ritualism, or empty formalism. Spirituality without religion may drift into vagueness, unmoored from ethical and cultural grounding. Together, they form the wholeness of Sanatana Dharma—an eternal path that holds society upright and leads the individual toward ultimate liberation.

The Bhagavad Gita (18:66) sums up the highest spiritual truth:

"Sarva-dharman parityajya mam ekam saranam vraja; aham tvam sarva-papebhyo moksaisyami ma sucah."

"Abandon all dharmas and take refuge in Me alone; I shall liberate you from all sins, do not grieve."

Here, Krishna does not negate religion, but takes it to its culmination in pure spirituality—surrender to the Divine.

Conclusion

In the Hindu vision, religion (Dharma) is the sacred scaffolding of life, while spirituality (Adhyatma) is its innermost essence. One gives order to society, the other grants freedom to the soul. To study Vedas and sastras requires academic discipline, but to walk the inner path requires only devotion and surrender. The scriptures point the way, but the Guru reveals the destination.

Religion is the path; spirituality is the arrival. Together, they complete the journey from outer conduct to inner liberation—a journey Sanatana Dharma has preserved for millennia, for all who seek Truth.

(Author is Editorial Advisor, The Chancellor)

देहस्थदेवताचक्र स्तोत्रम्

Translation and Explanation

A. K. RAZDAN

ईशादलस्था भैरवमर्चयते परिमलैर्विचित्रैर्या।
 प्रणमामि सर्वदा तां घ्राणाभिख्यां महालक्ष्मीम्॥१३॥
 “I bow always to महालक्ष्मी, known as घ्राण
 (smell), who, seated on the ईशादल petal,
 worships भैरव with manifold and wondrous
 fragrances.”

Smell (घ्राण) is here personified as महालक्ष्मी, the auspicious source of fragrant presence. The reference to perfumes as offerings (परिमल-विचित्रा) indicates the subtler strata of sensory delight: scent evokes memory, presence and the atmosphere of devotion. The ईशादल placement is specific to Abhinavagupta's cakṛa-map, in practice, meditating on inner fragrance is a tantric technique to call awareness to subtle sensation, recognising the divine in even the most elementary perceptual register.

भाव/ Faculty : घ्राण / परिमल (smell / fragrance)

षड्दर्शनेषु पूज्यं शट्त्रिंशत्तत्त्वसंवलितम् ।
आत्माभिख्यं सततं क्षेत्रपतिं सिद्धिदं नौमि
(वन्दे) ॥१४॥

“I bow to the Lord of the Field (क्षेत्रपति), ever worshipped within the six दर्शन (six schools of Sanatana philosophy), in whom the play of the thirty-six तत्त्व delights; I bow to that Self (आत्मा), the bestower of सिद्धि.”

This verse names the culmination, the क्षेत्रपति is the immanent Lord who pervades the entire inner mandala. The reference to षड्दर्शन (the six orthodox schools) is not sectarian but meta-philosophical: all systems, properly understood, honour the same ultimate Self. The त्रिंशत्-तत्त्व (thirty-six tattvas) are the Trika/Kaula ontological grid; delight in their play (संविलास) points to Abhinavagupta's aesthetic metaphysics - the cosmos is Shiva's play. Worship of the क्षेत्रपति is worship of one's own Self as the field whose mastery yields सिद्धि , the fruits of yogic accomplishment.

भाव/ Faculty : आत्माभाव / क्षेत्रपति
(Self-identity / lord of the field)

संस्फुरदनुभवसारं सर्वान्तः सततसंनिहितम् ।
नौमि सदौदितमित्थं निजदेहगदेवताचक्रम् ॥१५॥
“The circle of deities within one’s own body,
whose essence is the spark of immediate
experience, is ever and wholly present in
the innermost. It is not merely a temporary,
occasioned contrivance but truly the native
Deha-Devata-Chakra.”

The hymn closes with a decisive ontological assertion: the देहस्थदेवताचक्र is not an occasional ritual figment but the



constant, inner reality of experience (संस्फुर-अनुभव-सार). Abhinavagupta insists on two things: (1) the divinities are experientially immediate, one can touch them by direct presence; (2) their presence is ever-near (सतत-सन्निहित) within the living body. This is the core pith, the essence, that the sacred mandala is not external, it is your own luminous embodiment.

भाव/Faculty : साक्षात्-अनुभव / आत्मस्थता (direct experience / innermost abiding)

इति श्री देहस्थदेवताचक्रस्तोत्रमभिनवगुप्तपादानाम्॥

Param Shaivacharya Sri Abhinavagupta's देहस्थदेवता चक्रस्तोत्रम् is a profound hymn with a vast view. Its teaching can be summarised in Trika terms as follows....

Embodied sacrality: The human body is a living मण्डल; every organ, prana, faculty and subtle knot is a locus of divine presence (देवता). To recognise this is to transform ordinary life into an inner temple - देहो देवालयः

Consequence for regular practice: The stotra prescribes an inner Pooja, not merely external rituals, but contemplative recognition (प्रत्यभिज्ञा) whereby the senses, the mind and the energies become offerings. Senses and faculties (इन्द्रिय-शक्तयः) become worship when viewed as manifestations of the Self.

अद्वैत result: The final verses assert the Trika claim of अभेद: all multiplicity, the thirty-six tattvas, the deities, the pranas - are expressions of one चेतना (Shiva). Liberation is not an escape from embodiment, it is the realisation that embodiment was always the form of Shiva.

Method: The practical means are subtle attention (अवधान), discriminative insight (बुद्धि), consecrated enjoyment (भोग → भक्ति), and the transformation of egoic functions (अहंकार, मनस्) into acts of worship. The stotra shows how each faculty has a devotional form and how that form, when acknowledged, returns one to the centre.

Aesthetic metaphysics: Abhinavagupta's language is deliberately aesthetic: he speaks of lilies and fragrances, flowers and petals, play and nectar, because for him metaphysics and rasa (aesthetic and taste) are inseparable. Realisation is not

[illegible][illegible]

merely cognitive; it is the tasting of one's own being as luminous bliss.

The hymn is an invitation and a map. If the sadhaka contemplates it, recites it with devotion, and lets the senses be inwardly consecrated, the inner circle - निजदेहदेवताचक्र - reveals itself not as doctrine but as presence. In Abhinavagupta's view this presence is the very pulse of liberation: to discover, in one's own body, that one has always been the Lord.

ॐ चित्तशक्त्यै नमः ॥

ॐ स्वात्मने शिवस्वरूपाये नमः॥

**(Author is a Sadhak, Keen Researcher of Kashmir Shaiv Darshan ,an authority on Sharda Script and Sanskrit Scriptures of Kashmir)
Concluded**



A group of approximately 15 people, including officials and experts, are seated around a large, light-colored conference table in a modern meeting room. They are engaged in a discussion. A large screen at the front of the room displays a presentation slide. The room has a dark wood-paneled wall and a large window. The participants are dressed in formal attire, including traditional Indian clothing like kurta and shawl. The table is set with water bottles, glasses, and documents. A large screen at the front of the room displays a presentation slide. The room has a dark wood-paneled wall and a large window. The participants are dressed in formal attire, including traditional Indian clothing like kurta and shawl. The table is set with water bottles, glasses, and documents.

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When Skin Speaks

Dermatological Signs Of Endocrine Disorders

DR. ENNAKSHEE SHARMA

When we think of conditions like diabetes or thyroid imbalance, the focus is often on blood sugar readings, hormonal assays, and internal organ systems. Yet, one of the most telling—and often the earliest—indicators of these metabolic disturbances is right in front of us: the skin. As dermatologists, we frequently encounter patients who come in for seemingly routine skin complaints, only to find that their rashes, pigmentation changes, or hair and nail issues are tied to underlying endocrine disorders.

The skin is not merely a protective barrier—it is a dynamic organ influenced by hormones, metabolism, and circulation. Diabetes mellitus and thyroid disorders, two of the most common endocrine diseases worldwide, often present with distinctive cutaneous signs. Recognizing these can help in early diagnosis, better disease monitoring, and improved quality of life.

Diabetes and the Skin

Diabetes mellitus is not just a disorder of glucose metabolism; it is a systemic disease affecting blood vessels, nerves, and immunity. The skin, being highly vascular and immunologically active, reflects these changes in multiple ways.

Common Skin Manifestations in Diabetes:

1. Acanthosis Nigricans: One of the most recognizable skin markers of insulin resistance.

Appears as thickened, velvety, darkened skin, commonly on the neck, underarms, or groin.

Often precedes overt diabetes and signals metabolic syndrome.

In dermatology practice, this finding frequently leads us to recommend screening for diabetes in young patients with obesity.

2. Diabetic Dermopathy

Small, round, brownish atrophic patches on the shins, sometimes called “shin spots.”

Caused by microangiopathy—damage to small blood vessels.

Harmless but often overlooked as “minor scars.”

Presence indicates underlying vascular compromise, which may mirror microvascular complications in other organs like the retina or kidney.

3. Necrobiosis Lipoidica:

Reddish-brown plaques with yellowish centers, often on the shins.

Skin becomes thin and may ulcerate.

Though uncommon, it is quite specific to diabetes.

Represents collagen degeneration and vascular changes.

4. Diabetic Foot Ulcers

Result from a combination of neuropathy (loss of sensation) and vasculopathy (poor circulation).

Recurrent or non-healing ulcers can lead to infections and, in severe cases, amputations.

Dermatologists emphasize foot care as a cornerstone of diabetes management.

5. Infections

Fungal: Candida albicans thrives in high-glucose environments, leading to recurrent infections in skin



folds, nails, and mucosa.

Bacterial: Styes, boils, carbuncles, and cellulitis occur more frequently due to impaired immunity.

Recurrent or stubborn infections often warrant investigation for diabetes.

6. Pruritus (Itching)

Generalised or localised itching, particularly in the genital area, is common.

Attributed to dryness, neuropathy, or secondary infections.

7. Bullosis Diabeticorum

Rare but striking presentation: large, painless blisters appearing spontaneously on hands, feet, or legs.

Resolve on their own but indicate long-standing uncontrolled diabetes.

8. Xanthomas

Yellowish papules caused by elevated lipids in poorly controlled diabetes.

Often eruptive, appearing on extensor surfaces and buttocks.

Why These Happen: The Pathophysiology

Hyperglycemia leads to glycation of proteins, damaging collagen and elastin.

Microangiopathy impairs blood supply, delaying healing.

Neuropathy predisposes to unnoticed trauma and infections.

Immune dysfunction makes patients prone to bac-

terial and fungal colonization.

Thus, the skin becomes a canvas where the metabolic chaos of diabetes is painted in visible strokes.

Thyroid Disorders and the Skin:

The thyroid gland orchestrates metabolism, thermoregulation, and growth through its hormones—thyroxine (T4) and triiodothyronine (T3). Fluctuations in thyroid function—whether hypothyroidism (underactive) or hyperthyroidism (overactive)—create striking changes in skin, hair, and nails.

Skin in Hypothyroidism

1. Dry, Rough Skin (Xerosis cutis)

The most common manifestation.

Patients describe their skin as coarse, scaly, or “parchment-like.”

Results from reduced eccrine gland secretion and slowed epidermal turnover.

2. Pallor with Yellowish Hue

Reduced blood flow causes pallor, while carotene accumulation leads to a subtle yellow tinge.

Often seen on palms and soles.

3. Myxedema

A hallmark of severe hypothyroidism.

Characterized by non-pitting edema due to accumulation of mucopolysaccharides in the skin.

Face may appear puffy with swollen eyelids, giving

CONT. ON PAGE 23

























































































































































































































































