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Omar calls for...

experts participated in the inaugural session. A large number of growers, progressive farmers, youth innovators and agri-entrepreneurs from different parts of Kashmir also attended the event aimed at enhancing income, productivity and sustainability in agriculture.

After inaugurating the three-day AgriTech Mela, the Chief Minister inspected over 100 stalls set up by agri-preneurs, budding and established start-ups showcasing a wide range of innovative agricultural technologies at the university campus.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister interacted with stall owners and enquired about their produce, start-ups, enterprises and technological interventions.

Speaking at the event, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah highlighted the significant progress and contributions made by progressive farmers, growers, agricultural scientists, faculty members and researchers in transforming the agrarian landscape of Jammu & Kashmir. He said their sustained efforts are shaping the future of agriculture in the region and driving innovation under various government programmes aimed at modernisation and economic growth.

He emphasised that to compete at the global level, Jammu & Kashmir must enhance both the quality and quantity of its local agricultural produce.

Highlighting the role of SKUAST-K and SKUAST Jammu, the Chief Minister said the universities have achieved remarkable milestones in advancing agriculture and horticulture and have played a vital role in supporting and empowering local farmers through research, innovation and field outreach.

The Chief Minister stressed that technology-driven and organic farming solutions are essential prerequisites for boosting the rural economy. He underlined the importance of adopting modern agricultural practices, value addition, branding and market linkage strategies to ensure better returns for farmers.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah further noted that initiatives like GON'GUL provide a crucial platform for farmers to interact with experts, explore innovative tools and access new market opportunities, ultimately strengthening the agricultural ecosystem of Jammu & Kashmir.

He also lauded the innovative displays put up by budding agri-entrepreneurs and start-ups, particularly appreciating student-led technological solutions in farming and irrigation. He emphasised the vital role of universities in advancing agricultural innovation and nurturing the next generation of agri-entrepreneurs.

The three-day mega event, themed "NextGen Agriculture: My Produce-My Price," is showcasing cutting-edge agricultural innovations, sustainable farming practices and emerging entrepreneurial opportunities in the agriculture sector.

The AgriTech Mela is expected to witness participation from progressive farmers, start-ups, agri-business firms, researchers and students over the next three days.

US trade deal...

Sciences and Technology here. Abdullah said India wants democracy in Bangladesh and wants it to remain stable and prosper.

"We hope that after their government formation, both the countries will improve their relations, which had otherwise witnessed some bitterness," he added.

To a question about the Indo-US trade deal, the chief minister said that while he does not know how the deal would benefit the rest of the country, for Jammu and Kashmir "as of now, we can only see losses".

"The items that will be allowed to enter here duty-free are all what Jammu and Kashmir produces --" almonds, walnuts, apples, fresh fruit, dry fruit. You (government) are saying there will be no impact, that fruits from Jammu and Kashmir will not be sold for less than Rs 70 a kilo. But what does it mean (when you say) they will sell their good fruit and we will sell our bad ones?" he said.

Abdullah said the fruit growers in Jammu and Kashmir have made huge investments to improve the quality of their produce.

"New varieties and high qualities have come up, we have been able to take the fruit to the markets at the right time through the CA stores. Now, if you are saying that good things will come from outside and less valued items should be sold from here, that is a huge joke with our growers. We want our best and high value products to be sold. So, I can only see losses because of this deal and no benefit," he added.

The chief minister said attempts are being made, with the help of the UT's agriculture universities, to take technology-driven organic solutions to farmers to give a fillip to the rural economy and agriculture.

"People are visiting this festival in lakhs to benefit from this. That is what we want. If have to compete with countries like the US -- which seems to be the case after the trade deal because their agriculture produce will enter our country -- we will have to improve our productivity and quality, for which this festival plays an important role," he said.

LG, CM greet...

the health, happiness, and prosperity of every citizen.

The sacred festival, celebrated as 'Herath' by Kashmiri Pandit community, is a symbol of our spiritual tradition and communal harmony. Mahashivratri holds a place of profound significance in our life. The holy festival provides opportunity to pause and reflect the timeless virtues Lord Shiva exemplifies. The teaching Lord Shiva embodies is one of universal service. The holy festival reminds us that each person carries the responsibility to contribute to humanity's wellbeing in the ways uniquely available to them.

May Lord Shiva continue to shower his divine blessings upon us. May this festival strengthen the bonds of brotherhood for years to come. Har Har Mahadev!"

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah also extended his warm greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the auspicious occasion of Mahashivratri.

In his message, the Chief Minister said that Mahashivratri is a sacred festival symbolising devotion, faith and spiritual awakening, and it inspires people to follow the path of righteousness, harmony and compassion.

"On the blessed occasion of Mahashivratri, I convey my heartfelt greetings and best wishes to all. May this sacred occasion bring peace, happiness and prosperity to every household," the Chief Minister said.

The Chief Minister also prayed for strengthening the bonds of brotherhood, unity and communal harmony in Jammu and Kashmir, and wished that the festival may usher in progress and well-being for all.

11 drug peddlers...

Bhatyari in the Bishnah area in Jammu, a police spokesperson said. Police recovered 10.62 grams of heroin from their possession.

Another drug peddler, Mohd Mansha, from Dablehar in the R S Pura area, was nabbed with 24.86 grams of heroin, while Somu Kumar was nabbed with 8 grams of heroin in the Bakshi Nagar area of Jammu city.

In Rajouri, police arrested three drug peddlers - Riaz with 20 grams of heroin and Waseem Yusuf and Taraf Mehmood with 30 grams of Charas- from Sunderbani and Thanamandi areas.

Abhishek Attri was arrested with 5.48 grams of heroin in Samba, and Rupesh Kumar alias "Bobby" was arrested with 6.75 grams of heroin in Kathua district, the spokesperson added.

Pulwama attack's 7th...

world saw how India punished these terrorists."

He added that Operation Sindoor, which was carried out following the terror attack in Pahalgam last year, was also evidence of India's response to terror attacks.

"The Congress did nothing to protect the nation's security but gave only statements and indulged in seams while buying weapons," Modi alleged.

Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor Manoj Sinha said the soldiers' unwavering commitment, unparalleled bravery and selfless service to the motherland will forever inspire every citizen.

"Humble tributes to the valiant martyrs who made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty during the dastardly terrorist attack in Pulwama in 2019. Their unwavering commitment, unparalleled bravery and selfless service to the motherland will forever inspire every citizen," the Lt Governor said in a post on X.

A suicide bomber crashed his explosive-laden vehicle into a bus ferrying Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel on February 14, 2019, killing 40 jawans.

Days later, India launched a retaliatory attack, which came to be known as the Balakot airstrike.

Meanwhile, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and party leader Rahul Gandhi also paid tributes to CRPF personnel who died in the terror attack Pulwama in 2019 and said their courage and devotion to the nation will always be remembered

The chief ministers of Punjab, West Bengal, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Uttar Pradesh, and Haryana also hailed the soldiers' sacrifice.

In a post on X, West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee said, "I salute today the brave CRPF jawans who were victims of the Pulwama incident on this day in 2019."

UP CM Adityanath said, "Salute to all the brave sons of Mother India who sacrificed their lives in the cowardly terrorist attack in Pulwama. The sacrifice of our immortal soldiers is a proclamation of the invincible resolve of Indian valour, which always inspires us to eradicate terrorism from its roots. Jai Hind."

Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu said while the world marks February 14 as a day of love, it was also a day to acknowledge "the greatest love of

all, the love for one's nation. Their bravery will never be forgotten, and their families will always be in our prayers."

Manipur Chief Minister Y Khemchand Singh, in a post on X, said, "On this solemn day, we bow our heads in profound respect and remembrance of the brave martyrs who made the supreme sacrifice in the tragic terror attack at Pulwama."

"The people of Manipur stand in complete solidarity with the families of our fallen heroes and reaffirm our collective resolve to uphold the unity, integrity, and sovereignty of our great nation," Singh said.

Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann posted on X, "We pay our heartfelt tribute to all the martyrs who laid down their lives in the Pulwama terror attack. Our nation will forever remember the sacrifice of these brave soldiers."

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini said the "supreme sacrifice of mother India's valiant sons is an indelible symbol of the nation's unity, security, and resolve. Their indomitable courage and patriotism forever inspire us to stand united and firm against terrorism."

Senior leaders and workers of the Jammu and Kashmir unit of the BJP visited Lethpora, the site of the attack in south Kashmir's Pulwama district and paid floral tributes.

BJP's J-K spokesperson Altaf Thakur said the bravery of the slain CRPF personnel has brought peace and progress to Kashmir:

He, however, criticised Kashmir-based political parties for not paying tribute to the martyrs.

"If a terrorist dies, these regional parties visit their homes for mourning, but none of them came here today to pay tribute to our soldiers," Thakur said.

Former Manipur CM Biren Singh, UP deputy chief ministers Keshav Prasad Mawrya and Brajesh Pathak, and TMC national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee also paid homage to the CRPF personnel.

In a post on X, Abhishek Banerjee said the soldiers' deaths call for accountability, vigilance, and a robust national strategy against the forces that threaten our sovereignty. "As a nation, we owe our martyrs transparency in matters of security, unity beyond partisan divides and a commitment to protecting every life," the TMC leader said.

Posters of wanted...

"We have circulated his poster - both with and without a beard - for the information of the general public. It is the poster of the same individual (Saifullah) who is the main JeM commander who is alive and attempting to flee Chatroo belt," he said, requesting people to immediately share information with police on spotting this person anywhere at any time.

The SSP said there are reports suggesting that he may attempt to escape from Chatroo disguised in women's clothing or wearing a burqa. "If anyone notices a suspicious person, they should immediately inform the police or security forces."

He said the police and other security agencies are fully alert to the situation and are involved in search operations continuously to tackle any terror activity.

"A search operation has been ongoing for the past four days in the Thathri area of Doda. Whenever we receive information about suspicious individuals, search operations are immediately launched from our side," he said.

The officer also appealed to the public to ensure that the police are informed before renting out any house or shop in their area, emphasising that prior verification is essential for maintaining security and preventing misuse of rented premises.

The pasting of posters comes amid heightened security operations in the high-altitude areas across the Jammu region following recent encounters and intelligence inputs about the presence of terrorists in the region.

The posters were seen at key checkpoints and public places, including Nagri, Dessa, Ganpat Bridge at the Doda entry point, and Thathri, the officials said, adding that more such notices are being displayed in other vulnerable areas to maximise public outreach.

The posters, carrying photographs and brief details of the suspects, urge the public to share any credible information with the police while assuring complete confidentiality and protection of informants, the officials said.

They noted that the poster campaign is part of intensified efforts to dismantle terror networks operating in the Chenab Valley, including Doda and neighbouring Kishtwar districts, which have witnessed a series of encounters in recent years after militants attempted to revive activities in parts of the Jammu region that had largely been cleared of terrorism.

Meanwhile, security forces busted a terrorist hideout in Chilli forest in the Gandoh area of Doda on Saturday morning, leading to the recovery of eatables and blankets, the officials said.

They said the recovery suggests recent movement in the area, prompting forces to intensify combing operations in the surrounding forests.

A massive search operation has been underway in the higher reaches of Doda, Kishtwar, Kathua, Udhampur, Rajouri and Poonch districts over the past month, resulting in nearly a dozen encounters - mostly in Kishtwar, Udhampur and Kathua - and leading to the killing of four Pakistani terrorists of JeM and an army soldier.

While two terrorists were killed in an encounter in the Ramnagar forest area of Udhampur and another in the Chatroo area of Kishtwar on February 4, one terrorist was gunned down at Parhetar in Kathua on January 23. An army paratrooper also lost his life in a gunfight in Chatroo on January 18.

Officials informed that search operations, particularly in Thathri and Gandoh areas of Doda, have been intensified after locals reported suspicious movement of persons believed to be terrorists who may have escaped recent cordon-and-search operations in Kishtwar and moved towards adjoining forest belts.

Duty-bound to...

allocated housing where needed; a total of 19 families have been provided homes, and land has been given to several other families in coordination with the respective state governments," he added.

He further noted that the CRPF and CRPF Pariwar Kalyan Sanastha are covering the full cost of education for the children of these families and will continue to do so.

"All children will receive compassionate appointments as they reach adulthood. Families have been granted approximately Rs 2.25 to Rs 3 crore in relief from the government," he said.

To address the genuine concerns of martyr families, a Veer Pariwar App has been launched. The CRPF Welfare Directorate maintains active communication with all martyr families to meet their needs, Singh said.

The CRPF chief said the force lost eight of its personnel in various operations last year.

"We are in contact with their families as well and remain dedicated to their welfare, addressing all their needs. I assure all martyr families that the CRPF stands with them and will strive to fulfil their requirements," he added.

The attack occurred on February 14, 2019, when a Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) suicide bomber rammed an explosive-laden car into a CRPF bus, which was part of a convoy on the Srinagar-Jammu national highway, resulting in the deaths of 40 CRPF personnel.

Kathua DM imposes...

the orders for the immediate prevention of danger to human life and disturbance to public tranquility.

"In exercise of the powers vested in me under Section 163 BNSS, I hereby restrict unnecessary movement in the border area in a strip of five kilometres from the International Border falling within the area of responsibility of the (BSF) unit, from BOP (Border Outpost) Paharpur forward to BOP Karol Krishna," the order said.

The district magistrate also prohibited the movement of heavy vehicles, including trucks, tippers and multi-axle vehicles, on the old Samba-Kathua road between 9 pm and 6 am.

"The restrictions have come into force from February 14 and shall remain in effect for 60 days from the date of issuance unless rescinded earlier," the order said, adding any violation would invite punitive action under Section 223 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

When contacted by PTI, Sharma said the order is in continuation of earlier restrictions, with the only modification being the extension of the restricted zone from two kilometres to five kilometres from the International Border.

"The earlier order expired today, and accordingly a revised order has been issued with certain changes," he said.

Over 6.5 kg...

the International Border during the search and subsequently seized, he said, terming the seizure as a "significant achievement" on the anti-drug trafficking front.

A case under the relevant section of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act was registered, and further investigation is underway to trace the exact source and destination of the recovered contraband, he said, adding that a breakthrough is expected as the investigation progresses.

Police urged the citizens, especially those residing near the International Border, to come forward with any information regarding illegal drug activities in their localities.

"With continued public cooperation, sincere efforts are being made to build a drug-free and crime-free society," the spokesperson said.

The recovery comes a day after police arrested two people for allegedly smuggling heroin from Pakistan using a drone in the border areas of Kathua district.

Jatin, a resident of Pathankot in Punjab, and Danish Dogra alias Sajan of Jakhbar in Kathua, were arrested in connection with a case related to drone-dropping near Nagri and the recovery of 150 grams of heroin.

The duo was in touch with a Pakistan-based smuggler through VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) calls.

India raises its...

we were spending approximately 3.7 per cent of our GDP on climate action. Today, that figure is close to 5.6 per cent. We have invested the funds. We are not waiting for financing and technology to come from elsewhere but they must come," she said.

She further said that India will continue to invest in renewable energy, and we have been steadily building on that commitment.

Carbon capture strategies have been funded in the Union Budget 2026-27 so that they can be implemented across the country, she said, adding that they are being incentivised.

Furthermore, she said, India has achieved two-thirds of its nationally determined commitments in the renewable sector and that too four years ahead of the target date.

Making a case for differentiated cost of climate action, Sitharaman said, country which are less polluting should contribute less towards climate action.

"As much attention as we give to emission control, we need to look at resilience and adaptation. Otherwise, you're going to sacrifice a lot. Technologies will have to talk to each other. No one can say they've created a perfect system to counter climate concerns," she said. And it can't be that countries which have contributed less to emissions are made to pay equally, she said, adding that bearing the cost of climate action will need differentiated treatment.

Railways to hire...

real-time basis with the help of technology.

The services will include cleaning of all coaches, toilets and basins; garbage collection; attending to minor repairs; coordinating water refilling as required, and checking and reporting the status of safety equipment.

This will be carried out by trained supervisors and service staff.

"Frequency of cleaning will be regulated based on peak and non-peak hours, and war rooms will be created to monitor the cleaning process with the help of technology," Vaishnav said.

He explained that 80 trains have been identified for implementation of the reform, and based on the experience, all other trains will be brought under it.

The minister also introduced another reform under which cargo-related facilities will be created on railway land.

The development of warehouses, grinding units, and processing and aggregation units will be permitted on spare railway land to help improve Railways' freight business. Underutilised godowns will be developed as Gati Shakti Cargo Terminals and cargo facilities.

Efforts will be made to facilitate the easier migration of sidings and private freight terminals into Gati Shakti Cargo Terminals through a simplified process, Vaishnav said. He added that a framework for dispute prevention has been outlined in the policy, and dispute resolution has been simplified with powers delegated to Divisional Railway Managers.

NSG conducts advanced...

Police Academy (SKPA) by expert instructors from the NSG Training Centre, Manesar, Haryana, with the objective of enhancing the operational capabilities of police personnel in handling IED-related threats and mitigating the risks involved in the disposal of bombs, IEDs and other explosive substances.

Deputy Director SKPAU and Senior Superintendent of Police Benam Tosh commended the NSG faculty for imparting high-quality professional training and appreciated the participants for their dedication and keen interest throughout the programme which concluded on Saturday.

"Such advanced training initiatives shall go a long way in strengthening counter-terrorism preparedness and ensuring public safety especially in current emerging security challenges," he said.

He said the course provided comprehensive training to identify, detect, neutralize and dispose of bombs and IEDs found at any site besides post-blast investigation techniques and standard operating procedures (SOP).

The course also included practical demonstrations, hands-on exercises and simulated scenarios to acquaint the participants with the real-time operational skills, the SSP said.

Bovine smuggling bid foiled; 4 bovines rescued, vehicle seized

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Continuing its sustained crackdown against bovine smuggling under Operation Kamdhenu, Jammu (Rural) Police successfully foiled a bovine smuggling attempt and rescued bovine animals.

During naka checking, a police team of Police Post Sidhra intercepted a vehicle at a naka point, which was found involved in the illegal transportation of bovines. As a result, 04 bovine animals were rescued, and one Mahindra vehicle bearing registration number JK19A-5079 was seized.

The driver of the vehicle, identified as Mohd Rafiq S/o Bashir R/o Pogal Paristan, Ramban was taken into custody.

Accordingly, FIR No. 41/2026 under Section 223 BNS and Section 11 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act has been registered at Police Station Nagrota. Further investigation is underway.

Man held for kidnapping, sexually assaulting minor girl

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: A 27-year-old man was arrested for allegedly kidnapping and sexually assaulting a minor girl in the outskirts of Jammu on Saturday, police said.

The girl was safely recovered and provided necessary medical assistance as per legal protocol, a police spokesperson said.

He identified the arrested accused as Arjun Lakhotra, a resident of Bishmah, and said a case under Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act was registered against him. Legal proceedings against the accused have been initiated as per law, the spokesperson said. Meanwhile, police also recovered a man for kidnapping a minor girl from Sirah-Kotla village of Kakryal in Reasi district on Saturday. The minor was abducted some eight days ago by her neighbour Sahil Ali who was also arrested during the operation, the spokesman said.

Rahul Gandhi's policy is to lie loudly, repeat it: Amit Shah

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

KARAIKAL (PUDUCHERRY): Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday asserted that the interests of Indian farmers and fishermen have been fully secured in the recent FTAs and the Indo-US trade deal signed by the country, and slammed top Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for misleading them with "lies" and trying to create an "illusion".

Also, Shah praised Prime Minister Modi's decisive leadership by taking resolute action against terrorism--the surgical strikes after the Pulwama attack, and later Operation Sindoor. He paid Shradhanjali (tributes) to the CRPF jawans who made the supreme sacrifice for the nation.

Launching a scathing attack on the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Shah charged that Gandhi "has started a new tradition of telling lies daily" and asked him to "carefully" go through the fine-print of the recent deals clinched with the UK and EU, besides the US, which has particularly come under sharp attack from the Congress MP. "Its Rahul Gandhi's policy to lie, lie loudly, repeat it. But people have identified your lie manufacturing factory," he said in his address at a well-attended BJP rally in this poll-bound Union Territory.

"Rahul Gandhi wants to mislead the country's fishermen and farmers. He intends to spread illusion by telling lies," Shah charged.

In the Free Trade Agreements signed with the UK and the EU, besides the Indo-US trade deal, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has ensured "100 per cent protection" for farmers, fishermen and livestock breeders, Shah said.

Asking Gandhi to go through the provisions in the FTAs and the trade deal carefully, Shah reiterated that the interests of the Indian stakeholders has been ensured "100 per cent." Fishermen would benefit from the FTAs.

He charged that farmers' interests were "sold off" during the UPA regime headed by the late Manmohan Singh.

"The FTAs and trade deal will not cause any harm to our farmers. The harm to farmers was done during your Manmohan Singh government. Several global agreements were signed back then in which the interests of farmers were sold off. Here, Narendra Modi ji has ensured the protection of farmers and livestock rearers," he said. PM Modi has worked to provide 100 per cent protection to farmers, brothers and sisters involved in animal husbandry, and fishermen, Shah stated.