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LG orders thorough...

Abdullah said in a post on X. Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary also condemned the killings, and said "increasing crime is a matter of concern."

He also expressed concern over the "life-threatening" attack on Bani MLA Rameshwar Singh, who was assaulted by a group of protesters while he had gone to meet the family members of the deceased at a local hospital in Billawar late Saturday night.

The Congress also demanded a high-level investigation to clear the apprehensions of locals.

Meanwhile, senior BJP leader Sunil Sharma said terrorism which has been buried in Kashmir will not be allowed to raise its head in Jammu.

Addressing protesters gathered to condemn the killings in Billawar area of Kathua, the Leader of Opposition in J&K Assembly said terrorists have come up with a new modus operandi where they are not using weapons to kill people only to create confusion.

Sharma, accompanied by party MLAs Satish Sharma and Rajiv Jasrotia, who visited Billawar also said he briefed Union Home Minister Amit Shah about the incident. "He (Shah) asked me to tell the people of Billawar that he is standing behind them."

"We are seeing a new modus operandi where terrorists are not using weapons to kill people...this is an act to create confusion. Jammu region is being deliberately targeted at the behest of Pakistan which wants to put hurdles in India becoming the world power," Sharma told the gathering at Phinter Chowk in Billawar.

BJP workers held massive protests across Kathua including Billawar where a complete shutdown was observed to protest the killings.

Meanwhile, senior Congress leaders including former MP Choudhary Lal Singh were barred by police from visiting the area, drawing strong protest by the party.

Choudhary Lal Singh, who is also a former minister, told reporters that this is for the first time that such a situation had emerged in Kathua district and it reflects the alleged failure of the home ministry which is directly controlling the law and order situation in J&K.

"We demand an inquiry to identify the culprits and a compensation of Rs 10 lakh and a government job for the families of the deceased," he said.

Deputy Inspector General of Police, Jammu-Kathua-Samba Range, Shiv Kumar said all aspects of the case will be looked into and the results of the investigation will be shared with the public soon.

Accompanied by Senior Superintendent of Police, Kathua, Shobit Saxena and Additional Deputy Commissioner Vinay Khosla, the DIG met the protesting locals of Malhar, Malad, Marhoon, Deota and adjoining areas in Billawar, and assured them that the security arrangements will further be strengthened.

"A team has been constituted for the investigation of the case, while the Village Defence Guards (VDGs) will be strengthened to make people feel secure. Those willing to be part of the security grid will be given training," Kumar told reporters in Billawar.

He said several police and Special Operations Group (SOG) personnel are already on the ground to secure the area, along with Army and paramilitary forces.

The postmortem of the deceased was conducted by a specially-constituted doctors' team at a Kathua hospital and the bodies were handed over to their families for the last rites.

The bodies reached the homes of the deceased late on Sunday evening and the cremation will take place on Monday, the officials said.

Meanwhile, a shutdown was observed in Billawar and adjoining areas on Sunday to protest the killing of the three civilians.

"This is a clear case of target killings by terrorists, engulfing the peaceful area in fear and anger...we want the government to intensify the anti-terrorist operations in the forests to neutralise the terrorists hiding in the forests for the last one year," local BJP leader Gopal Krishan, who led a group of protesters at Phinter Chowk, said.

Senior BJP leader and Billawar MLA Satish Sharma, who visited the deceased family, said it is premature to say who killed the three civilians.

"It is a matter of investigation as nobody has seen how they were killed. Police are looking in all aspects, including the terror angle, in the case," he said.

Proud of our...

the splendid all around display," the prime minister said.

Bowling first after Rohit lost his 12th straight toss, India's spinners restricted New Zealand to 251 for seven in the allotted 50 overs, with Kuldeep Yadav (2/40) and Varun Chakaravarthi (2/45) making significant contributions with the ball.

India completed the chase of 252 with six balls to spare after Rohit (76 off 83 balls) and Shreyas Iyer (48 off 62 balls) shone with the bat.

Police attaches drug...

"The market value of the said properties is around Rs 3.50 crore. The action was carried out under Section 68-F of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act in connection with a case registered at the Budgam police station," he added. The case pertained to the recovery contraband substances codeine phosphate and poppy straw in commercial quantities from the accused's possession.

Anti-terror ops, security...

discussed the measures and anti-terror operations to neutralize the terrorists operating in the higher reaches besides the steps taken for strengthening the border security grid, they said.

Investment proposals worth...

envisages incentives like Capital Investment Incentive, Capital Interest subvention, GST Linked Incentive, Working Capital Interest Subvention.

"This package has received an overwhelming response and has been fully subscribed. As of the registration deadline on 30th September 2024, a total of 971 applications, representing an investment of Rs 10,471 crore and employment of 51,897 have been approved for registration.

"J&K has witnessed the setup of industries with investments exceeding Rs 500 crore. These large-scale ventures have catalysed the development of ancillary industries, enhanced-local employment, and firmly positioned J&K as a competitive investment destination," the survey said.

Forty-six new industrial estates are being developed to boost job opportunities, with PSUs like NBCC, IRCON, CPWD handling the work.

The report said handicrafts and handlooms are vital to J&K's economy, providing significant employment to around 4.22 lakh artisans.

"The sector includes renowned products like Pashmina Shawls, Kashmiri Carpets, and various woodcrafts. The government focuses on skill development with 634 training centers. A unique QR Code-based certification system has been established which ensures authenticity of the crafts. Many crafts have received GI tags, and more are in the pipeline," it said.

Exports have rebounded post-COVID, with total handicraft exports reaching Rs 1,162.29 crore in 2023-24, doubling from 2021-22.

Jammu and Kashmir's start-up ecosystem has also seen a remarkable 287 per cent growth, with DPIIT-registered start-ups increasing from 237 in 2020 to 917 in 2024, including 333 women-led ventures.

Over 1,600 start-ups have been registered with the Entrepreneurship Development Institute (EDI), marking a threefold rise, the report said, adding the New Start-up Policy 2024-27 and the J&K start-up portal, launched in July 2024, offers strong fiscal and non-fiscal support.

In terms of Ease of Doing Business (EODB), Jammu and Kashmir has made significant progress becoming the first UT to integrate its National Single Window Portal with the national platform.

The region achieved 97 percent compliance with the Business Reform Action Plan (BRAP), with 341 out of 352 reforms approved, and the JK-SW Incentive Calculator was recognized as a Best Practice.

The Regulatory Compliance Burden (RCB) has also been reduced by 3,226 regulatory hurdles, further streamlining business operations, the survey said.

During 2024-25, it said Jammu & Kashmir's cooperative sector made notable progress viz. 664 societies were registered, creating potential jobs for 1,223 people.

NMR marks 13.3...

rate (IMR) also dipped to 16.3, marking a drop of 16.1 points, according to the Economic Survey Report for 2024-25 tabled by the Jammu and Kashmir government in the Assembly on March 6.

The report said the government is continuing its efforts to enhance basic health infrastructure at all levels, including technical manpower and medical equipment to provide improved healthcare delivery with special focus on maternal and child health, communicable and non-communicable diseases, and to face the upcoming challenging ailments. Jammu and Kashmir has moved forward from the category of 'performers' to 'front-runners', as per the SDG India Index 2023-24 released by the NITI Aayog, with the score of the health sector increasing from 70 to 78.

"The NMR has reached a single digit of 9.8 per 1,000 live births, a 13.3-point decrease, while the IMR has dipped to 16.3 with a decrease of 16.1 points. Sex ratio at birth also recorded a significant improvement, from 923 to 976," the report said.

The percentage of fully-immunised children against preventable diseases has increased to 96.5 per cent, it said.

Institutional births have increased from 85.6 per cent to 92.40 per cent, while life expectancy at birth in J-K has reached 74.3 years -- the highest in the country after Kerala and Delhi -- against a national average of 70 years, the report said.

Since its inception, 100 per cent families have registered and 86.12 lakh Ayushman Golden cards have been issued under the AB-PMJAY - SEHAT scheme, it said, adding that this initiative has facilitated treatments worth Rs 2,800 crore, benefiting 15 lakh individuals.

As many as 489 ambulances have been geo-tagged and integrated with online 108/102 ambulatory services. These efforts have enabled quick response times (average response time less than half-an-hour) and served more than 4.50 lakh beneficiaries since August 2020. Over the past four years, J-K has significantly expanded its healthcare workforce, including hiring of 10,919 doctors and paramedical staff under the National Health Mission (NHM), alongside filling up of 36,274 regular positions in health and medical education, besides supporting 13,965 ASHA workers, the report said.

Infrastructural upgradation and consolidation of health institutions include two AIIMS, two state cancer institutes and two bone and joint hospitals, while 3,100

health and wellness centres have been operationalised by upgrading the existing public health centres and Ayush dispensaries, the report said.

Also, bed capacity in hospitals has been increased to 21,966 while medical oxygen generation capacity has been extended from 14916 LPM to 1,27,901 LPM (almost nine times) since August 2020 through 177 operational oxygen generation plants (OGPs), it said. There has been an unprecedented expansion in medical education with the establishment of new medical colleges, it added.

Ten government medical colleges, including nine offering MBBS, one unani, one ayurvedic and one homeopathy courses have been started.

The capacity of MBBS seats has been increased from 500 to 1,300, the report said, adding that more than 5,000 seats have been added in MBBS, DNB, post-graduate and nursing courses since 2019.

India lifts Champions...

after India lost well-settled batters.

Pacer Nathan Smith, who replaced injured Matt Henry in the line-up, felt the heat as the 37-year-old Rohit hammered him for two sixes and as many fours in the beginning of the chase.

At the other end Shubman Gill (31), who helped Rohit to raise 105 runs for the opening wicket, was more subdued and the lone spark in his innings was a maximum off spinner Rachin Ravindra.

But a stunning catch by Glenn Phillips off left-arm spinner Mitchell Santner ended his stay, and opened a creek for the Kiwis.

Virat Kohli came to the middle accompanied by loud cheers but his stay lasted just two balls, an effort to turn Michael Bracewell off his pads saw the master batter getting trapped plumb in front.

By now, Rohit had decided to knuckle down after racing 49 in the Power Play segment.

In the next 16 overs the Mumbai man added only 27 runs more to his score, as he tried to play a rather forgotten role of innings building.

His belief in his own defence too seemed to have come back as he smothered Santner and Bracewell quite effectively.

It ended when his charge against Ravindra resulted in a stumping by Tom Latham. India were 130 runs away from a win at that juncture.



India wins Chamopins Trophy: Celebrations in Jammu.

India were 122 for three then and needed some consolidation, Shreyas Iyer (48) and Axar Patel (29) gave them precisely that during a 61 runs stand for the fourth wicket.

They carried India closer to the shore but Shreyas, who was dropped on 44 by Kyle Jamieson off Phillips, fell four runs later to Santner and Axar too perished to Bracewell.

But those dismissals only created artificial excitement as a focused KL Rahul (34 not out) helmed India's march home.

But the Indian spinners also can rightfully claim a good chunk of credit for this victory. Kuldeep (2/40) and Varun Chakravarthi (2/45) were excellent alongside Axar and Ravindra Jadeja as the quartet conceded only 144 runs in the 38 overs bowled between them. However, the start made by New Zealand did not justify the total that they eventually managed.

They raced to 69 for 1 in 10 overs despite losing Will Young to Chakravarthi, who came in the sixth over. But the introduction of Kuldeep 11th over changed the complexion of the game.

With his first ball, Kuldeep consumed Ravindra, who failed to read a wonderfully concealed googly that disturbed his stumps.

It also ended a good 57-run opening stand, in which Ravindra, who punished Hardik Pandya for a six and two fours in row, was dropped on 28 by Mohammed Shami off his own bowling. In the very next over, Kane Williamson's forward prod off the left-arm wrist spinner eventuated in a return catch as the Kiwis slipped to 75 for three in 12.2 overs. The four-pronged Indian spin attack assumed control of the proceedings from that point, and New Zealand could not find a boundary for the next 81 balls.

Kuldeep and Varun found an appreciable turn off the deck. Axar and Jadeja, however, relied more on quickness to cramp Kiwis batters for space, and both the methods were equally effective on the day. Chakravarthi also mixed his endless ensemble of tricks and accounted for Phillips to end a promising 57-run alliance for the fifth wicket. However, Mitchell, who cleverly manipulated the field for singles and twos, brought up his fifty in 91 balls. His twin boundaries off Shami in the 46th over indicated a late charge. He also stitched a useful 46-run partnership with Bracewell, who played some hefty shots, for the sixth wicket before falling to Shami.

Bracewell's enterprise meant that Kiwis would get 50 runs in the last five overs. But the effort was way too less on the night that firmly belonged to India.

Israel says it is cutting off its electricity supply to Gaza

■ AGENCY

JERUSALEM: Israel announced Sunday it is cutting off its electricity supply to Gaza. The full effects were not immediately clear, but the arid territory's desalination plants receive power for producing drinking water.

Israel last week cut off all supplies of goods to the territory of over 2 million people, in an echo of the siege it imposed in the earliest days of its war with Hamas. It seeks to press the militant group to accept an extension of the first phase of their ceasefire. That phase ended last weekend. Israel wants Hamas to release half of the remaining hostages in return for a promise to negotiate a lasting truce.

Hamas instead wants to start negotiations on the ceasefire's more difficult second phase, which would see the release of remaining hostages from Gaza, the withdrawal of Israeli forces and a lasting peace. Hamas is believed to have 24 living hostages and the bodies of 35 others.

The militant group - which has warned that cutting off supplies to Gaza would affect the hostages as well - said Sunday it wrapped up the latest round of ceasefire talks with Egyptian mediators without changes to its position, calling for an immediate start of the ceasefire's second phase.

Israel has said it would send a delegation to Qatar on Monday "in an effort to advance the negotiations"

around the ceasefire.

Israel had warned when it stopped all supplies that water and electricity could be next. The new letter from Israel's energy minister to the Israel Electric Corporation tells it to stop selling power to Gaza.

The coastal territory and its infrastructure have been largely devastated by the war, and generators and solar panels are used for some of the power supply. The electricity cut also could affect water pumps and sanitation.

Israel has faced sharp criticism over cutting off supplies to Gaza. "Any denial of the entry of the necessities of life for civilians may amount to collective punishment," the United Nations human rights office said Friday.

The International Criminal Court said there was reason to believe Israel had used "starvation as a method of warfare" when it issued an arrest warrant for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu last year. The allegation is also central to South Africa's case at the International Court of Justice accusing Israel of genocide.

Israel has denied the accusations. It says it has allowed in enough aid and blamed shortages on what it called the U.N.'s inability to distribute it. It also accused Hamas of siphoning off aid.

The ceasefire has paused the deadliest and most destructive fighting ever between Israel and

Hamas, sparked by the Hamas-led attack on southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023. The first phase allowed the return of 25 living hostages and the remains of eight others in exchange for the release of nearly 2,000 Palestinian prisoners.

Israeli forces have withdrawn to buffer zones inside Gaza, hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinians have returned to northern Gaza for the first time since early in the war and hundreds of trucks of aid entered per day until Israel suspended supplies.

US envoy describes talks with Hamas

The White House on Wednesday made the surprise confirmation of direct US talks with Hamas.

On Sunday, envoy Adam Boehler told CNN that "I think you could see something like a long-term truce, where we forgive prisoners, where Hamas lays down their arms, where they agree they're not part of the political party going forward. I think that's a reality. It's real close."

When asked if he would speak with the militant group again, Boehler replied, "You never know."

He added: "I think something could come together within weeks," and expressed hope for a deal that would see all hostages released, not only the American ones.

Hamas on Sunday didn't mention its talks with the

U.S., but reiterated its support for a proposal for the establishment of an independent committee of technocrats to run Gaza until Palestinians hold presidential and legislative elections.

That committee would work "under the umbrella" of the Palestinian Authority, based in the occupied West Bank. Israel has rejected the PA having any role in Gaza, but hasn't put forward an alternative for postwar rule.

Hamas' attack in October 2023 killed around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, inside Israel and took 251 people hostage. Most have been released in ceasefire agreements or other arrangements.

Israel's military offensive has killed more than 48,000 Palestinians in Gaza, mostly women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which doesn't say how many of the dead were militants.

Now, with the cutoff of all supplies to Gaza, Palestinians are reporting sharp price increases for dwindling items as fears grow again, in the middle of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

"Since the ceasefire began, the situation has improved a little. But before that, the situation was very bad," said Fares al-Qeisi in the southern city of Khan Younis. "I swear to God, one could not satisfy their hunger."

Hindu temple vandalised in US with anti-India graffiti

■ AGENCY

NEW YORK/NEW DELHI: A prominent Hindu temple in the United States was defaced with anti-India graffiti by unknown individuals, prompting a strong condemnation from India and a demand for "stringent action" against those involved in the incident.

Bohasanwasi Akshar P u r u s h o t t a m Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS) said that its Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Chino Hills city of San Bernardino County faced desecration. Chino Hills borders Los Angeles County.

"In the face of another Mandir desecration, this time in Chino Hills, CA, the Hindu community stands steadfast against hate. Together with the community in Chino Hills and Southern California, we will never let hate take root," the BAPS Public Affairs posted on X.

"Our common humanity and faith will ensure that peace and compassion prevail," it said, without providing details of the incident.

India on Sunday strongly condemned the incident and called for adequate security to the places of worship in view of the incident.

"We have seen reports regarding the vandalism at a Hindu temple in Chino Hills, California. We condemn such despicable acts in the strongest terms," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal in New Delhi while responding to media queries on the incident.

"We call upon the local law enforcement authorities to take stringent action against those responsible for these acts, and also ensure adequate security to places of worship," he said.

The opposition Congress party also condemned the incident, saying such acts of hatred and intolerance were utterly unacceptable.

"The Indian National Congress condemns in the strongest possible terms, the vandalism of the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Chino Hills, California," Congress' media and publicity department head Pawan

ing details of the incident.

Khera said in a post on X.

"Such acts of hatred and intolerance are utterly unacceptable and have no place in any civilized society," he said and demanded action against the desecrators.

Patanjali Ayurved's co-founder Ramdev condemned vandalism at the temple and said India should take the initiative in finding a way to curb "religious terrorism".

Hindu American Foundation, a non-profit advocacy group in the US, said the vandalism at the largest Hindu temple in California occurred on Saturday and demanded the FBI and its Director Kash Patel to probe the matter.

"We ask @ChinoHills_PD, @FBI @FBIDirectorKash @DNIGabbard to investigate this latest in a string of anti-Hindu hate crimes on our sacred spaces," it said.

The Coalition of Hindus of North America (CoHNA), an advocacy group dedicated to improving the understanding of Hinduism in North America, drew attention to past such cases and demanded a thorough investigation.

"Another Hindu Temple vandalised - this time the iconic BAPS temple in Chino Hills, CA. It's just another day in a world where media and academics will insist there is no anti-Hindu hate and that #Hinduphobia is just a construct of our imagination," it said on X.

"Not surprising this happens as the day for a so-called 'Khalistan referendum' in LA (Los Angeles) draws close," it said.

CoHNA gave a list of 10 temples that have been vandalised or burglarised in the last few years.

In September, the BAPS Hindu temple in California's Sacramento was desecrated with expletive-laden graffiti, saying "Hindus go back!"

Nearly 10 days before the Sacramento incident, another BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Melville, New York, was defaced with hateful messages.

The Consulate General of India in New York had strongly condemned the incident.