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Time to change...

Shah said India has secured its place in all the sectors like green hydrogen, semi-conductors, electric vehicles, solar energy, defence, drones, space, mining and green fuel ethanol, which are going to impact the world economy for the next 25 years.

Citing the pole position that India has attained in the production of pulses, milk, jute production, and railway engines, the Home Minister said we will have to increase investment in research and development.

"Apart from this, today we are in second place in the world in mobile handset production, cement, steel and cotton production, and we have also reached second place in tea production. We have reached the third position in startups and motor vehicles. This shows that if we decide, we deliver," he said.

The last nine years have witnessed decisive policies, political stability, democracy and teamwork in the federal structure that led the country out of the "policy paralysis" which was prevalent during 2004-14, Shah said.

The period 2004-14 'shook the country', which was also the "last period" of political instability, while the last nine years have seen the result of performance, he said.

"The last nine years have been that of political stability and decisive policy-making... our GDP has grown from USD 2.03 trillion to USD 3.75 trillion during the period, which is almost double. Per capita income has grown from Rs 68,000 in 2013-14... to Rs 1.80 lakh," he said.

Shah said Modi has tried to change India in every field in the last nine years and has also been successful.

After the G20 meeting in India, a new energy has been infused not only in trade and industry but across every sector in the country, he said.

He said the success of G20, Chandrayaan, Mission Aditya and 33 per cent reservation for women in Lok Sabha and state assemblies have infused new energy in the entire nation.

The home minister said trade and industries are the centre of the country's economy, where the economy gets energy.

"Due to the changes brought about by policies, today 'India's Moment' is talked about everywhere, and India is known as a vibrant spot all over the world," he said.

Shah said whenever a company wants to shift base around the world, India emerges as the bright spot to relocate.

"Our country is the youngest, and we also have the largest number of engineers, doctors and technocrats. There is democracy here, there is teamwork, and the policy formulation is also clear under the leadership of Modi ji. Therefore, now no one can stop India from establishing itself at the first place in every field in the Amrit Kaal," he said.

The home minister said the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme has fulfilled the dream of Make in India in 14 sectors within the country.

He said that because of the new education policy brought by the Modi government, India is going to become the best destination in the world for students in the next 10 years.

Shah said that we live in a federal structure, and unless the concept of Team India is followed, comprehensive development of this country is not possible.

Modi has promoted the concept of Team India, and the Union government has increased the allocation to the states from Rs. 30 lakh crore, during 2004 to 2014, to Rs. 100 lakh crore in the nine years from 2014 to 2023, he said.

"Every farmer of the country and every small and big industry together form Team India, and only then will we be able to reach our goal in 2047. He said that today, Amrit Kaal is beginning; it is time to take a resolution and make a road map for Sankalp Se Siddhi; that is why this is the time, the right time," he said.

BJP CEC meeting...

Party sources confirmed that the meeting has been rescheduled to a single-day affair on October 1.

The meeting, according to party sources, will largely deliberate on the upcoming state elections in Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan.

The BJP has set sights on wresting power from the Congress in Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan. The polls are scheduled to be held towards the end of this year.

Three other poll-bound states - Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, and Mizoram - will also be a referendum of sorts on the BJP's popularity and the political headwinds going into next year's Lok Sabha elections.

BJP Disciplinary Committee...

proceedings against them, which could lead to their removal from official positions and even from the primary membership of the Bharatiya Janata Party if allegations of indiscipline are substantiated. The individuals have been given one week from the date of the notice to submit their unconditional apologies and undertakings.

The BJP Disciplinary Committee comprises Sunil Sethi as the Chairman, along with Aseem Gupta and Rekha Mahajan as members. The notices have been served through WhatsApp, and there will be no separate service of notice.

Farmers' stir: Passengers...

trains to Katra have been cancelled. Shiv Shakti train has also been cancelled," he said.

The official said that every day, 15,000 to 20,000 people arrive at the Katra railway station. "Of them, 70 per cent are pilgrims. Due to this agitation, some trains have been affected and the majority of trains are being diverted to ferry them," he said.

However, the number of stranded passengers at Jammu and Katra railway stations are increasing causing them inconvenience due to the cancellation and diversion of trains.

"We are stranded at the railway station. we don't know what to do. We would have reached home. But now they are saying that trains will be diverted.... It is a problem for us," Arvind Kumar of Gorakhpur said.

Bihari Lal of Chhattisgarh, returning home after paying obeisance at the Mata Vaishno Devi shrine, remained stranded at the railway station.

"We have been stranded here since yesterday after the train was cancelled. We don't know what to do. No one is listening to us. We are a group of eight people, including children," Lal said.

Suraj Singh of Ahmedabad, who along with 11 people returned from a Kashmir visit and were to take a train back home, was told that the train had been cancelled.

"They told us to come tomorrow. Where will we stay? It means Rs 10,000 to Rs 15,000 for staying in a hotel. Taxi operators demanded Rs 35,000 for a trip to

Delhi," he said.

PM changed J&K...

to power, terrorism has almost ceased in the valley. The removal of Article 370 brought peace to Jammu and Kashmir, and development with peace has been ongoing since 2019. It has become a capital of tourism from erstwhile terror capital", Chugh said.

He said people are experiencing positive changes brought about by the government, and they are content. "Therefore, the opposition's allegations are baseless, and their panic is evident," the BJP leader added.

On polls in Jammu and Kashmir, Chugh said opposition parties formed an alliance in the last District Development council, Panchayat, and block development council elections.

"However, lakhs of people came out to vote for Prime Minister Modi, and many secretly voted against the alliance. Mufti and Abdullah, who were arch rivals, formed an alliance due to declining support and public discontent. The people of Jammu and Kashmir will not accept this alliance. They are aware of the true nature of these parties," he added.

Foreign tourists can...

decision will rejuvenate the tourism sector in the Changthang region and broaden the scope of tourist destinations in the union territory," Commissioner-Secretary of Tourism Ladakh, Kacho Mehboob said.

Until September 15, Hanle was off-limits to foreign tourists. Only domestic tourists were allowed to visit the high-altitude village, which is also home to the Hanle observatory. This move aligns with the growing interest in Dark Sky' tourism, they said.

Mehboob said Martsemik and Sko Valley have been opened for tourism and trekking in Ladakh with the approval of the ministry.

Martsemik and Sko Valley are both excellent destinations for trekking, he said.

The Union Ministry of Tourism has announced Hemis village, the entry from Ladakh, as the best tourism village of India under the Silver' category.

This is a testament to Hemis village's outstanding charm and cultural richness, he said, adding that the Department of Tourism has also been awarded by the International Centre for Responsible Tourism (ICRT) under the category Diversity and Inclusion' in 2023.

India-Canada issue...

a senior Canadian diplomat in a tit-for-tat move to Ottawa's expulsion of an Indian official over the case.

The Canadian Prime Minister, he said, made some allegations initially privately and then publicly. "Our response to him both in private and public was that his allegation was not consistent with our policy. And if he had, his government had anything relevant specifics, we would look into," he said.

"We were open to looking at it now. That's where that conversation is at this point of time," Jaishankar said.

He said that for India, Canada has become a country where organised crime from India mixed with trafficking in people, mixed with secessionism and violence which is a very toxic combination of issues that people who have found operating space.

He acknowledged that there has been a lot between India and Canada on this issue preceding the remarks of the Canadian prime minister.

In the last few years, the issue of Khalistan has come back very much into play, because of what "we consider to be a very permissive Canadian attitude towards terrorists, extremists, people who openly advocate violence and they have been given operating space in Canada because of the compulsions of Canadian politics."

"I don't think most Americans, perhaps Canada, looks very different, it sort of depends, from where the interests where the shoe pinches. For us, it has certainly been a country where organised crime from India, mixed with trafficking in people mixed with cessationism, violence, terrorism. It's a very toxic combination of issues and people who have found operating space there," Jaishankar said.

A lot of "our tensions with Canada which well preceded what Mr. Trudeau said, I actually come out of that. And today, I'm actually in a situation where my diplomats are unsafe going to the embassy or to the consulates in Canada," he said.

On September 21, India suspended visa services for Canadian citizens in view of "security threats" faced by the Indian High Commission and consulates in Canada. Jaishankar noted that Indian diplomats in Canada were publicly intimidated.

"That has actually compelled me to temporarily suspend even visa operations in Canada. So, as I said, you know, often countries look very different depending on how you see them and what your interests are, but I have this problem in Canada," he added.

Not advisable to...

protection laws, various judgements and considering the maladies of child abuse, child trafficking and child prostitution that plague our society, the commission is of the measured view that "it is not advisable to tinker with the existing age of consent under the POCSO Act".

"However, having cautiously considered all the views and suggestions furnished in this regard, the commission said it considers it necessary that certain amendments need to be brought in the POCSO Act to remedy the situation in cases wherein there is tacit approval in fact though not consent in law on part of the child aged between 16 to 18 years," according to the report.

Noting that such cases do not merit to be dealt with the same severity as the cases that were ideally imagined to fall under the POCSO Act, the commission deems it fit to introduce guided judicial discretion in the matter of sentencing in such cases.

"This will ensure that the law is balanced, thus safeguarding the best interests of the child," it said.

The law panel said comments were also sought from the Ministry of Women and Child Development on the matter. "However, despite reminders, no response was received," it said.

During the consultations, the panel said, while there was a wide divergence of opinion on how to resolve the issue at hand, there was unanimity of thought when it came to the aspect of the POCSO Act working against the very children it ought to protect.

"The blanket criminalisation of sexual activity amongst and with a child, though intended to safeguard children, is leading to incarceration of young boys and girls who engage in such activities as a consequence of sexual curiosity and need for exploration that may to some extent be normative for an adolescent," the report said.

There is a social cost associated with the present situation, including the negative

impact upon the health, both physical and mental, of the children as well as a burden upon the investigating agencies and courts which takes away focus from the cases that are genuine and require immediate consideration, the report said.

The mental trauma and harassment faced by children who, on account of engaging in such a consensual act, come to fall within the ambit of the POCSO Act is certainly an issue of concern, the law panel pointed out.

In the deliberations, the commission said, three possible solutions came up -- blanket reduction of the age of consent to 16 years as was the situation prior to the enactment of the POCSO Act, introducing a limited exception in case of consensual sexual act involving a child above the age of 16 years, and introducing judicial discretion in sentencing in cases of consensual romantic relationship between adolescents or or with an adolescent between the age of 16 to 18 years.

"With respect to the first proposed solution, while giving a blanket exemption to consensual sexual acts by persons above 16 years may seem like a panacea for the situation we are faced with, however, the same will lead to many unintended consequences of much severe nature," it said.

Reducing the age of consent will have a direct and negative bearing on the fight against child marriage and child trafficking, the battles against which have been hard-fought and are still ongoing, it said.

With respect to the second proposed solution, carving out a limited exception for sexual relations with a child above 16 years is equally concerning and prone to misuse, the panel said.

"The consent of a child is no consent and reading the same would be deeply problematic. All children deserve the protection of the special law enacted for this very purpose and diluting the age of consent will deprive a significant portion of the child population, especially young girls aged 16 to 18 years, of the protection and expose them to unchecked exploitation," it said.

The panel report said increasing incidents of grooming and cyber-crimes such as sextortion are classic examples of how children in this vulnerable age group can be trapped and exploited.

The panel said the third solution of introducing judicial discretion in sentencing seems to strike a delicate balance to address the issue at hand and at the same time protecting children from sexual exploitation.

At least 56...

its roof to collapse. Three terrorists fled the scene, police said. Both Deputy Commissioner Fazle Akbar and IGP Akhtar Hayat Gandapur have confirmed in separate statements the number of casualties and those injured and added that the Hangu mosque rescue operation was complete.

Administrative and political leadership expressed outrage in response to the blasts. In Balochistan, caretaker Chief Minister Domki has directed authorities to arrest those responsible for the blast. He also announced three days of mourning throughout the province over the tragic incident.

Interim Interior Minister Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti also strongly condemned the blast. Stating that "terrorists have no faith or religion", Bugti asserted that all resources were being put to use during the rescue operation. He added that no effort would be spared in treating the injured and that terrorist elements did not deserve any concession.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President and former premier Shehbaz Sharif said that carrying out such a despicable act on an occasion marking the birth of the Holy Prophet is detestable now and in the hereafter.

He condemned the attack and offered condolences to the families of the deceased and injured.

Soon after the explosion in Balochistan, the Punjab police also said that its officers were performing security duties for Friday prayers at mosques across the province.

Police in Karachi said that Additional Inspector General Khadim Husain Rind has directed the police to remain "completely on high alert" in view of the Mastung blast.

He directed the policemen to tighten security arrangements regarding Eid-i-Miladun Nabi processions and Friday prayers across the city, as well as to monitor any unusual activities.

This is the second major blast that has terrorised Mastung over the last 15 days, Geo News reported.

Earlier this month, at least 11 people were injured in a blast in the same district.

Mastung has remained a target of terror attacks for the past several years with a major attack in July 2018 being one of the deadliest in the district's history during which at least 128 people were killed.

The Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, which was set up as an umbrella group of several terrorist outfits in 2007, called off a ceasefire with the federal government and ordered its terrorists to stage terrorist attacks across the country.

The group, which is believed to be close to al-Qaeda, has been blamed for several deadly attacks across Pakistan, including an attack on army headquarters in 2009, assaults on military bases, and the 2008 bombing of the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad.

In January, a Taliban suicide bomber blew himself up in a mosque packed with worshippers during afternoon prayers in Pakistan's restive northwestern Peshawar city, killing over 100 people.

Last year, a similar attack inside a Shia mosque in the Kocha Risaldar area in the city killed 63 people.

Pakistan has been gripped by a spate of terror attacks, with Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa particularly being under the radar of militants targeting security forces and civilians.

Women's reservation bill...

subsequent delimitation exercise - redrawing of Lok Sabha and assembly constituencies - will ascertain the particular seats being earmarked for women.

The quota for women in the Lok Sabha and assemblies will continue for 15 years and Parliament can later extend the benefit period.

While there is quota within quota for Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) women, the opposition had demanded that the benefit be extended to Other Backward Classes.

There have been several efforts to pass the bill in Parliament since 1996. The last such attempt was made in 2010, when the Rajya Sabha had passed a bill for women's reservation, but the same could not be passed in the Lok Sabha.

Data shows that women MPs account for nearly 15 per cent of the Lok Sabha strength while their representation is below 10 per cent in many state assemblies.

Our resolute stand during eastern Ladakh standoff made world take notice of political, military resolve of rising India: Army Chief

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The resolute and firm manner in which the Indian troops stood up to the Chinese forces during the eastern Ladakh border standoff has made the world take notice of "political and military resolve of a rising India", Army Chief Gen Manoj Pande said on Friday.

In his address during an event held here, he also said "Chinese belligerence is evident in its continuing propensity to project power outside its region", in turn presenting a "threat to the rules-based international order".

Gen Pande in his speech mentioned about the Indo-Pacific Army Chiefs Conclave, recently hosted by the Indian Army which witnessed participation of army chiefs or delegation leaders from 30 Indo-Pacific littoral countries.

The next significant pointer is a "rise of China". Position of political, economic, technological and military power has accorded it a "new position in the world order; which it intends to lead," he said.

"With its economic heft,

China has been looking at geopolitical and trade agreements as zero-sum games. Concurrently, Chinese belligerence is evident in its continuing propensity to project power outside its region, in turn presenting a threat to the rules-based international order.

"The resolute and firm manner in which we stood up to our northern adversary during the events of April-May 2020 has made the world take notice of our political and military resolve of a rising India. Many nations today also appear ready to take our northern adversary on various issues, head-on, especially post the pandemic, as realisation of its predatory economic pursuits sink in," he said.

The eastern Ladakh border standoff between the Indian and Chinese militaries erupted on May 5, 2020, following a violent clash in the Pangong lake areas.

India today reflects a confident optimism about the future. There is an improved consumer affluence, better standards of living, higher literacy quotient and "rising aspirations of our people", the Army

chief said.

"We are also witnessing, our nation's growing stature in the international environment, and a new perspective of how the world community views India," he added.

As a nation's influence expands, new challenges are bound to emerge, Gen Pande said.

Some will question our rise, some will contest it, while some

Vihan felicitated by Jindrah Club

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Roller Athelte Skating Club Jindrah, under its talent search program, honoured young skater Master Vihan Mehra, a budding talent in Roller Hockey.

The young talent presented professional roller hockey skate, hockey and kit bag. Vihar was selected under the guidance of Krish Gupta. The pair of skate along with playing kit gifted by Narinder Kumar Malhotra, an international roller hockey player and the senior member of the.

will attempt to compete. Grey-zone pursuits by "our adversaries" continue even as we speak. Also, the country is dealing with internal security situations, which have unique set of challenges, he said.

But, the most important pointer for us is that our legacy challenges of unsettled borders continue and stand amplified due to the collusivity between "our western and our northern

neighbours," he said.

"Speaking of conflicts, the character of war has undergone a profound change, disruptive technologies today have blunted the conventional force ratio superiorities. Kinetic weapons such as the guns and tanks too have witnessed, immense progression towards increased precision and destructive potential," the General said.



Roller Athelte Skating Club Jindrah honouring Vihan.

The skates handed over to Vihan by Madhu Khajuria (the senior most skater of India) and Rita Rehan. Khajuria appreciated the

Club for encouraging the budding talent.

Also present were Rita Rehan, Vishali Bagal, Arya Vir Singh and Krish Gupta.

Over 2.14 lakh people participated in first 14 days of cleanliness drive: Railways

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The Indian Railways on Friday said more than 2.14 lakh people participated in 1,934 activities with man hours of 6,62,990 in the first 14 days of the "Swachhata Hi Sewa" (SHS) cleanliness drive.

The fortnight-long campaign was launched on September 15 by the chairperson and CEO of the Railway Board, who administered a cleanliness pledge to all the railway employees at the Rail Bhawan here.

The participants in the campaign are railway employees, passengers and other stakeholders. The campaign aims at fostering a much greener and more eco-friendly railway system.

"Indian Railways, with its extensive nationwide network, plays a vital role in the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan," the railway ministry said in a statement. This year, the railway ministry has become a part of the joint SHS campaign launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs and Ministry

of Jal Shakti.

"Activities of SHS are integrated with day-to-day activities of Swachhata Pakhwada. The theme for Swachhata Hi Sewa campaign 2023 is 'Garbage Free India'. With all such zeal and guidance of Prime Minister, Indian Railways has witnessed a paradigm change in cleanliness level when compared to prior to year 2014," the ministry said. It added that the "railways is an environment-friendly means of bulk transportation and it has always been in the forefront of promoting clean and green environment. It has taken several initiatives for providing clean environment in and around railway stations and trains, such as bio-toilets on coaches leading to clean tracks, segregation of bio-degradable/non bio-degradable waste, solid waste management, discouraging use of single-use plastic etc."

During the "pakhwada", day-to-day activities like Swachh Samwaad, Swachh

Railgaadi, Swachh Station, Swachh Parisar, Swachh Aahar, Swachh Parsadhan etc. are being undertaken every year. This year, according to the ministry, a special focus is being given on the cleanliness of tracks at stations, the approach ways to major stations and elimination of plastic waste from the railway premises.

The Indian Railways has taken up various activities. For example, the SHS logo and banners have been posted on the railways' website and announcements made in trains or at stations for proper disposal of waste.

Besides, "prabhat pheris" have been taken out with the "Swachh Rail, Swachh Bharat" slogan to raise awareness and "nukkad natak" organised with the help of NGOs, religious bodies and school children at railway stations. People have been encouraged to desist from open defecation in areas approaching stations, on the tracks, on the yard or depot premises, the ministry said.