

India rejects references to J&K in China-Pak joint statement

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India on Thursday strongly rejected references made to Jammu and Kashmir in the China-Pakistan joint statement issued during Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's recent visit to Beijing, and asserted that the Union Territory as well as Ladakh "are and will always" be "integral and inalienable" parts of India.

External Affairs Minister spokesperson Arindam Bagchi, referring to the so-called China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), said New Delhi has consistently conveyed its "protests and concerns" to Beijing and Islamabad over the CPEC as it includes projects on the sovereign territory of India.

Bagchi said India "resolutely rejects" any attempts to utilise such projects to change the status quo in the area and

that any attempts to involve third parties in such activities are "inherently illegal, illegitimate and unacceptable".

The joint statement was issued on Wednesday following talks between Sharif and Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Bagchi said India noted the joint statement that contained several "unwarranted references" to the Indian Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir and also mentioned projects under the so-called CPEC and its extension to third countries.

"We have consistently rejected such statements and all parties concerned are well aware of our clear position on these matters. The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir and the Union Territory of Ladakh are and always will be integral and inalienable parts of India. No other country has locus standi



to comment on the same," he added.

"As regards the so-called China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, we have consistently conveyed our protest and our concerns to China and Pakistan. CPEC includes projects on the sovereign territory of India under forcible and illegal external occupation."

In his talks with President Xi, Sharif reaffirmed his government's willingness to "commit to high quality develop-

ment" of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and highlighted the salience of the CPEC to Pakistan's economic and social development, according to the joint statement.

The statement said the Chinese side reiterated that the Kashmir issue was a "dispute left from history" that should be properly and peacefully resolved based on the UN Charter, relevant UN Security Council resolutions and bilateral agreements.

MHA seeks report from Delhi Chief Secy over special treatment to Jain in Tihar

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has sought a detailed report from the Delhi Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar over the special treatment given to Satyendra Jain in Tihar Jail.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has complaint to the MHA about the VIP treatments being given to Jain in Delhi prison. Jain is in jail in connection with money laundering case in Tihar.

In its affidavit to the court, the ED has alleged that Satyendra Jain is getting massages and is also regularly meeting the co-accused in the case.

The ED said that Jain is getting all facilities including massage in Tihar jail. It accused Jain, who is also the prisons minister, of taking unfair advantage of his position. "As per the footage, the jail super-

intendent meets Jain every day, which is against the rules," said ED, adding that home-made food is provided to him in jail, defying the court order.

The ED further alleged that Jain's wife Poonam Jain comes to meet him often in the cell, which is against the jail manual and he often meets with other accused, Ankush Jain and Vaibhav Jain, who are also locked up in Tihar Jail, it said. Denying all the claims made by the ED, the Tihar jail administration, said that no one from outside visited Jain's cell.

"However, during the headcount in the morning, all the prisoners present in the ward can talk to each other. The co-accused that is being talked about is also in the same ward in which Mr Jain is, so they can talk among themselves, it said. "After the head count, when everyone goes to their own cell, they cannot go to each other's cell," it said.

NCST gives nod for inclusion of Pahari community in ST

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU



Almost one month after the Union Home Minister Amit Shah had promised the Scheduled Tribe status to the Pahari community, the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) has formally given its nod to the proposal of including "Pahari" community in the Scheduled Tribes list of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Currently, Jammu and Kashmir has 12 communities that have been notified as STs. "The commission has examined the proposal received from the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. The commission supports the proposal on the basis of the recommendation of the Office of the Registrar General of India," the NCST communicated. The recommendations for the inclusion had come from the commission headed

by Justice (Retd.) G.D. Sharma in Jammu and Kashmir.

The decision is set to impact the poll arithmetic in the frontier districts of Rajouri and Poonch. Out of nine Assembly seats reserved by the Delimitation Commission for the Scheduled Tribes six fall in these two districts.

The members of the Pahari community are mostly located in Rajouri, Poonch, Uri, Keran, Karnah, Pahalgam and Shopian. Rajouri and Poonch comprise eight assembly seats. The Paharis hold the key in Nowshera and Sunderbani while the remaining six seats are inhabited by 40 percent of the Gujjar community, who can effectively tilt the scales during elections.

Gujarat elections on Dec 1...

From Page 1 But BJP president J P Nadda also welcomed the announcement of the Gujarat Assembly polls and claimed that his party will again form a "double engine" Government in the State with a big majority under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership.

At the press conference, CEC Kumar brushed aside Opposition criticism of bias in delaying the poll announcement for Gujarat, contending that the Commission had to balance many things including weather, last date of the term of the Assembly and the number of days the model code of conduct should be in force.

"There is a tradition of counting the results together, there is weather and there is a difference between the last days when the Assemblies of both the States will expire and also a difference between the date of the model code of conduct. Still we announced the election dates 110 days ahead of the expiry of the Gujarat Assembly. And there

will be a 72 days' gap between the counting of the result and the expiry of the Assembly in Gujarat. We are quite in advance," Kumar said.

On the question of fairness arising out of this alleged delay, brought by the Opposition, Kumar said action and outcome speak louder than words. "If we say that our results are not correct, then it will be an insult to the people of this democracy. We have to balance lots of things before the announcement of dates. Several factors, including availability of forces, whether conditions among several other factors must be considered before poll dates are announced," he said.

"Many parties write long letters to us complaining about the EVM machines. And then their candidates win, those complaints stop. And the results get accepted," he added. He indicated that the elections could have been announced a couple of days earlier, but for the tragedy that took place in the State.

Arrest if you can, Soren dares ED, seeks...

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He told the gathering that he will fly to Raipur, the capital of neighbouring Chhattisgarh, to attend a "Tribal Mahotsav" during the day, for which he had received an invitation earlier. The Chief Minister reached the venue in the evening.

During his address to party workers here, the CM alleged that the BJP is making attempts to destabilise his democratically elected Government by misusing Central agencies ever since it was voted to power. "We have identified outsider gangs operating in the State, who are not letting the State's Adivasis stand on their feet. This State will be ruled by Jharkhandis and not

by external forces," Soren said. He appealed to the tribal voters in poll-bound Gujarat to abstain from voting for the BJP. Launching a scathing attack on the BJP, he claimed that the saffron party was not able to digest the people's mandate given to a party dominated by tribals and locals, and resorted to "politics of terror" by unleashing Central agencies. "They (BJP) possess a feudal mentality and cannot see tribals, Dalits and oppressed (people) growing," the JMM leader said. Soren alleged that the present dispensation at the Centre was of traders who believed only in taking, not giving. Claiming that whenever the State demanded its dues from

the Centre, it got ED, CBI and court cases in return, he warned of severe consequences if his democratically elected Government is toppled. Soren exuded confidence that his Government will complete its five-year term. The CM also took a jibe at Governor Ramesh Bais for not making public the content of the Election Commission's letter to Raj Bhavan on an office-of-profit case against him. Soren faces the threat of losing his membership of the Assembly in the case. He alleged that the Governor is possessing envelope for over two months creating a state of confusion.

In a tweet, he said, "The time has come to give a befitting reply to the political conspiracy of the Opposition." Soren on Thursday termed the Enforcement Directorate's summons to him as a "weapon" used by the BJP to target him and said if he has committed a serious offence then he should be directly arrested. Queried about his no-show before the ED, Soren said, "Do you think we are 'chor-uchakke' (thief-miscreants) or 'hatyare' (murderer)? They issued the summons yesterday (Wednesday) and asked me to appear today (Thursday). Don't we have our engagements? I got an invitation to attend the tribal dance festival (in Raipur) a month ago and my programme was already fixed."

Develop ecosystem for...

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While dealing with the subject of a corruption-free India, the Prime Minister said "for a developed India, trust and credibility are critical".

"Earlier Governments not only lost people's confidence but they also failed to trust people", he said.

"We have been trying to change the system of scarcity and pressure for the last 8 years. The Government is trying to fill the gap between supply and demand. Technology, security saturation and 'Aatmnirbharta' are three key ways of tackling corruption", said the Prime Minister.

He asked the CVC to "devise a way of ranking departments on the basis of pending corruption cases and publish the related reports on a monthly or quarterly basis". "No corrupt person should get political-social support, every corrupt person should be put in the dock by the society, it is also necessary to create this environment", the Prime Minister told the gathering of the officials.

"Many times the corrupt people are glorified in spite of being jailed even after being proven to be corrupt. This situation is not good for Indian society. Institutions acting against the corrupt and corruption like the CVC have no need to be defensive", said the Prime Minister.

He further said "When you take action with conviction, the whole nation stands with you". Making the objective before the CVC clear, Modi said no matter how powerful the corrupt may be, they should not be saved under any circumstances. "It is the responsibility of organisations like you," he went on to add.

The legacy from the long period of slavery of corruption, exploitation, and control over resources, unfortunately, received more strength after the independence, he said.

Imran shot... 25 seats to watch out...

From Page 1 "He (Khan) was misleading the people and I could not bear watching it so I... attempted to kill him," he said in a video confession.

PTI leader Imran Ismail said that he was standing with Khan when he was attacked. "It was a straight fire... The bullet was meant to kill, not to scare," he claimed.

Senior PTI leader Shabbaz Gill said that "Imran Khan is our red line and an attempt has been made to cross that red line". He said that Khan will fight till his last breath.

Pakistan's top leadership, political leaders and the military strongly condemned the attack on Khan.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif condemned the attack and directed the Interior Minister for an immediate report on the incident. "I pray for the recovery and health of PTI chairman & other injured people. Federal government will extend all support necessary to Punjab govt for security & investigation. Violence should have no place in our country's politics," Sharif tweeted.

He has instructed Interior Minister Rana Sanaulah to seek an immediate report on the incident from the police.

Prime Minister Sharif also postponed a press conference on his recent trip to China after the firing incident, Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb tweeted.

President Arif Alvi termed the attack on Khan as "heinous assassination attempt".

"I thank Allah that he is safe but injured with few bullets in his leg & hopefully non-critical. This attack is shocking, alarming, disgraceful, deceitful & cowardly. May Allah give him health & to all those injured," tweeted Alvi, who belonged to Khan's party before assuming presidency.

The Pakistan Army has issued a statement condemning the attack on Khan. "Firing incident during Long March near Gujranwala is highly condemnable. Sincere prayers for precious life lost and speedy recovery and well being of Chairman PTI Mr Imran Khan and all those injured in this unfortunate incident," it said.

25 seats to watch out...

From Page 1 4. RAJKOT WEST: Narendra Modi won from this seat in February 2002 after becoming chief minister for the first time in October 2001. BJP veteran Vajubhai Vala represented this seat for six terms between 1980 and 2007. He vacated it for Modi in 2002. The 2017 contest turned interesting after Indranil Rajguru, then Congress MLA from Rajkot-East, announced he would take on Vijay Rupani instead of contesting from his 'safe seat'. Rajguru lost and recently joined the Aam Aadmi Party.

5. GANDHINAGAR NORTH: Gandhinagar city, the capital of Gujarat, does not have any specific caste equation as most of its residents are state government employees and their family members. Gandhinagar North constituency was carved out in 2008. In 2012, BJP's Ashok Patel won with a thin margin of over 4,000 votes. In 2017, Congress leader C J Chavda defeated Patel with nearly 4,700 votes.

6. AMRELI: Gujarat's first chief minister Jivraj Mehta was elected from Amreli in Saurashtra region in 1962. BJP candidates won from Amreli from 1985 to 2002. In a major upset, Congress's Paresh Dhanani snatched it from BJP in 2002. He was defeated in 2007 by BJP's Dileep Sanghani, but Dhanani wrested it back in 2012 and again won in 2017.

7. PORBANDAR: This constituency, dominated by Mer and Koli voters, has long witnessed rivalry between BJP's Babu Bokhiria and Congress's Arjun Modhwadia. In 2017, Bokhiria defeated Modhwadia, former leader of opposition and former state Congress chief, with a thin margin of 1,855 votes.

8. KUTIYANA: This is the only seat held by Sharad Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party in Gujarat. Kandhal Jadeja, son of alleged gangster late Santokben Jadeja, defeated the BJP in 2012 and 2017. He voted for BJP candidates during the Rajya Sabha polls and was later served a notice by the NCP leadership.

9. GONDAL: Famous for the political rivalry between the Patel and Rajput communities, the seat is currently held by

BJP's Geetaben Jadeja, a Rajput and the wife of former MLA and local strongman Jayrajsinh Jadeja who is out on bail in a murder case.

10. MEHSANA: A Patidar dominated seat and a BJP bastion since 1990. BJP leader and former deputy CM Nitin Patel won from here in 2012 and 2017. Mehsana city saw violent protests during the Patidar quota agitation. As a result, Patel's winning margin was just a little over 7,100 last time.

11. VARACHHA: A Patidar-dominated seat in Surat city. Saw violence during the Patidar quota agitation ahead of 2017 polls. Former Gujarat minister Kishor Kanani won on the BJP ticket from here in 2012 and managed to retain it in 2017.

12. JHAGADIA: Bharatiya Tribal Party founder Chhotu Vasava has been winning from this tribal-dominated seat since 1990. He recently severed ties with AAP. The other seat held by the party is Dediapada.

13. ANAND: Anand has a mix of Patel and OBC voters. Currently held by Congress' Kanti Sodha Parmar who lost to the BJP candidates in 2012 and in a 2014 bypoll but emerged victorious in 2017.

14. PAVI JETPUR (ST): This reserved seat in Chhotaudepur district is held by Leader of Opposition Sukhram Rathva of the Congress.

15. JASDAN: Currently held by BJP's Kunvarji Bavalia, one of the tallest Koli leaders in the state. Bavalia was a five-time Congress MLA but switched sides after winning in 2017 on a Congress ticket.

16. DARIAPUR: A Muslim-dominated seat in Ahmedabad city that came into existence in 2012. Congress' Gyasuddin Shaikh has been winning since. With AIMIM entering the fray, it will be a four cornered battle between the BJP, Congress, AAP and AIMIM.

17. JAMALPUR-KHADIA: A Muslim-dominated seat in Ahmedabad formed in 2012 when the BJP won due to a division of Muslim votes between Congress and independent candidate Sabir Kabiwala, who is now AIMIM's Gujarat president. In 2017, Congress won the seat. This time, AIMIM is like-

ly to field Kabiwala, a sign of trouble for the Congress.

18. CHHOTA UDAIPUR (ST): Congress veteran and 11-time MLA Mohansinh Rathva has been winning from here since 2012. Now Rathva has announced his retirement and is seeking a ticket for his son. Congress' Rajya Sabha MP Naran Rathva is also pitching for his son.

19. BHARUCH: A seat with a high concentration of Muslim voters. BJP has been winning from here since 1990.

20. GODHRA: Another seat with sizable Muslim population. Senior Congress leader C K Raulji won in 2007 and 2012 from here. He then switched to the BJP and won against the Congress in 2017 but with a wafer-thin margin of 258 votes.

21. BHAVANAGAR RURAL: BJP strongman and Koli leader Purshottam Solanki has been winning from here since 2012. He may be dropped this time due to deteriorating health.

22. VADGAM (SC): Young Dalit leader Jignesh Mevani won as an Independent from here in 2017 with Congress support.

23. UNJHA: Modi's hometown Vadnagar in Mehsana district falls under this constituency. Unjha is famous for Umiyadham, temple of Kadva-Patidar community's patron deity Maa Umiya. In a major upset in 2017, Congress' Asha Patel defeated BJP's Narayan Patel. She switched to the BJP and won the by-poll in 2019. The seat fell vacant in December 2021 after her death due to dengue.

24. RADHANPUR: OBC leader Alpesh Thakor won on a Congress ticket in 2017 but resigned in 2019 to join BJP. He lost to Congress' Raghu Desai in the bypoll. Local BJP leaders are reportedly opposed to his candidature.

25. LIMBAYAT: BJP's Sangita Patil has been winning from here since 2012. The seat falls under Gujarat BJP chief CR Paatil's Navsari Lok Sabha constituency. It has a sizable Muslim population and Sangita Patil demanded the imposition of Disturbed Areas Act in Limbayat to prevent ghettoization.

NCR-PULSE

DELHI PAVILLION AT ITF TO BE DESIGNED AS E-BUS

New Delhi: The Delhi pavilion at the India International Trade Fair to be held later this month at Pragati Maidan, will be designed as e-bus and display the rich cultural heritage and history of the city. It will showcase Delhi as 'The City That Cares', said a Delhi government statement. "This time, a glimpse of the initiatives including in the field of health, education, infrastructure, ease of doing business will be seen as part of the Delhi pavilion in the trade fair as an insight into our nation's future," Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said.

BJP THANKS PM FOR GIVING FLAT KEYS TO POOR

New Delhi: BJP leaders have thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi on behalf of entire Delhi for giving the keys of flats to thousands of slum dwellers of Delhi giving them the right to live with dignity. It is not just the key to the flat but the key to their fate. A senior delegation of BJP leaders met the Union Minister for Housing and Urban Development, Hardeep Puri, to thank the Prime Minister.

AIRPORT LINE SERVICES TO BE HIT TILL NOV END

New Delhi: Services on the Airport Express Line will be affected till the end of November due to track maintenance work, Delhi Metro said on Thursday. The 23-km line connects New Delhi and Delhi Sector-21 metro stations. "In view of the ongoing track maintenance work on the Airport Express Line (AEL) for increasing the operational speed of trains, the frequency of trains on the AEL may get slightly affected after 11 PM till the end of revenue service hours and up to 7 AM from the start of revenue service hours," the Delhi Metro said in a statement.

RENOVATE BASTI VIKAS KENDRA: SISODIA TO OFFICIALS

New Delhi: Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Thursday directed officials to renovate the Basti Vikas Kendra at Khichripur here and open it for public use within a week. Basti Vikas Kendras have been set up by the Delhi government in various slum clusters with an aim to provide space for various social events as well as facilities for the people living in localities nearby.

ITI STUDENTS TO INTERACT WITH SCHOOL STUDENTS

New Delhi: A programme will be designed in which ITI students and graduates can interact with school students and encourage them to pursue professional courses in these institutes, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said on Thursday. Advanced professional courses of Industrial Training Institute help students build the conviction to achieve their career aspirations and give them clarity about future goals, he said while interacting with the students at ITI in Khichripur. Sisodia said the Delhi government's ITIs are playing a 'vital role' in the mission to upskill India's youth.

JAMIA STUDENTS PROTEST TO GET HOSTELS OPENED

New Delhi: Hundreds of Jamia Millia Islamia students staged a protest on Thursday demanding the opening of hostels which have remained shut for over two years owing to the Covid pandemic. The students raised slogans and held placards that read 'Reopen hostels', and 'Jamia administration wake up', among others. The students claimed that the protest has been extended till late evening, even as a notice was issued later in the day that said JMI vice chancellor Najma Akhtar has approved the reopening of hostel for boys and girls.

FAMILY TRYING TO RAISE ₹17.5 CRORE FOR AILING SON

New Delhi: Delhi-based Jangra family is raising funds through India's leading crowdfunding platform ImpactGuru.com for their 8-month-old son Kanav Jangra who is suffering from SMA (Spinal Muscular Atrophy) Type 2. The estimated treatment cost for the disease stated by the experts will be around USD 2.1 million (Rs 17.5 crore). Kanav's disease is restricting his ability to perform basic tasks like moving, eating, breathing, and swallowing. His nerve cells are slowly dying, and he may lose his complete muscle control.

Diesel cars can't...

From Page 1 The CAQM also directed closure of all industries running on non-clean fuels in the region, "even in areas which do not have PNG infrastructure and supply". Delhi's 24-hour average AQI stood at 450 on Wednesday.

The CAQM said NCR State Governments/Delhi Government should decide on allowing public, municipal and private offices to work on 50 per cent strength and the rest to work from home and the Central Government may take a decision on permitting work from home for Central Government offices.

The CAQM further advised children, elderly and those with respiratory, cardiovascular, cerebrovascular or other chronic diseases to avoid outdoor activities and stay indoors, as much as possible. The commission said State Governments may consider additional emergency measures like closure of schools/colleges/ educational institutions, closure of non-emergency commercial activities and plying of vehicles on odd-even basis.

"The commission while comprehensively reviewing the overall air quality parameters during the meeting noted that due to unfavourable meteorological conditions with slower wind speed and rising farm fire incidents, it is considered necessary to implement stage IV of GRAP with immediate effect as a precautionary step to avoid further deterioration of overall air quality in the NCR," the CAQM said in a statement. According to the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago's (EPIC) Air Quality Life Index (AQLI) released in June, the residents of Delhi stand to lose 10 years of life expectancy due to poor air quality.

