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We are not ...

The Opposition, however, said the answers provided at the meeting by the government were "unsatisfactory" and demanded that a debate be held on the West Asia situation in both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

Lashing out at the government, Congress's Tariq Anwar said Pakistan is performing the mediator's role while "we are still mute spectators".

He said there should be a debate on the situation in Lok Sabha under rule 193 and in Rajya Sabha under rule 176.

All Union ministers part of the Cabinet Committee on Security -- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Home Minister Amit Shah, External Affairs Minister Jaishankar and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman -- represented the government.

Union Health Minister JP Nadda and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju also attended. Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri made a presentation before the gathering.

Tariq Anwar and Mukul Wasnik of the Congress, Dharmendra Yadav of the Samajwadi Party, Sasmit Patra of the Biju Janata Dal (BJD), Sanjay Jha of JD-U, Srikant Shinde of Shiv Sena, Sanjay Singh of Aam Aadmi Party, John Brittas of CPI-M, Supriya Sule of NCP (SP), Arvind Sawant of Shiv Sena (UBT), Asaduddin Owaisi of AIMIM were among the Opposition leaders who attended the meeting, which lasted for nearly two hours.

The sources said the government conveyed that there is no need for panic as India has enough stock with more crude oil and gas coming.

"We have already done advance order. Diversification of sources of oil and gas has been undertaken and now we are procuring from 41 countries," the government told the meeting.

It is a diplomatic success that four India-bound ships, carrying petroleum products, have already crossed the Strait of Hormuz while five more are expected to cross soon. There are 18 India-bound ships which are stranded around the Strait of Hormuz, the participants were told.

On the US attack and sinking of an Iranian ship, the government said that had it been in Indian waters it would have been saved but unfortunately the ship was near Sri Lankan waters.

"There is a sense of gratitude on the part of Iran as we have protected other ships and sailors," the government told the meeting.

"We are good friends with everyone - the US is our largest trading partner, Israel is our largest technological partner and we have good relations with Iran too," it said.

The opening remarks were made by Defence Minister Singh with Jaishankar and Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri also speaking during the meeting.

During the question answer session, it was mostly Jaishankar who replied to the opposition's queries and concerns. On a few occasions, Home Minister Shah also intervened.

Briefing reporters on the meeting, Rijiju said the meeting was convened because Prime Minister Narendra Modi wanted it and information was shared about the crisis in West Asia.

"Several questions were raised by opposition friends regarding the situation arising from the conflict in West Asia involving Iran, Israel, and the United States - specifically about how it would impact India and what steps the government has taken for Indian citizens," he said.

On behalf of the government, comprehensive and detailed responses were provided, Rijiju said.

"I feel satisfied to inform you that all the questions asked by the opposition and the information they sought were fully addressed by the government," he asserted.

In the end, all opposition members stated that in this time of crisis, whatever decisions the government takes and whatever steps are required based on the situation, they will stand united and support them, he said.

Speaking with reporters, Anwar said an attempt was made to seek clarification from the government, but the meeting was "unsatisfactory".

"It has been our longstanding demand that this issue be debated in both Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha under Rules 193 and 176. Only then will people feel satisfied... The government says it (we do not want war), but what difference does merely saying that make? The reality is that a conflict is already underway. Pakistan, which is smaller than us and weaker in every respect, is today acting as a mediator and playing that role, while we remain mute spectators," the Congress leader said.

Brittas said the government has been assuring the opposition that everything is safe.

"The opposition parties expressed their disapproval of the government's silence. All the opposition leaders who spoke said that the government should have taken a position with regard to the unilateral attack against a sovereign independent country Iran by the United States. And there have been questions raised with regard to the visit of our Prime Minister to Tel Aviv, and also there were certain questions about the proactive role of Pakistan," Brittas said.

On the absence of Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and TMC members from all-party meet on West Asia situation, Union minister Pralhad Joshi said it was a "highly irresponsible" behaviour.

"The statements that Rahul Gandhi is making raise serious questions about whether he is genuinely interested in India's interests or in spreading rumours within the country. This has created significant doubt in people's minds. Today, in a way, he has even appeared to appreciate Pakistan. At a time when Pakistan is making statements against India, he seems to be lending credibility to them. He should first clarify whether he stands with India or with Pakistan," he said.

'Noscacity ...

Secretary in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, said all refineries are operating at high capacity with "adequate crude inventories", while "sufficient stocks of petrol and diesel are being maintained" and retail outlets are functioning normally nationwide.

"Don't believe in rumours. We have adequate fuel stocks and the government is making all efforts to reach them to consumers," she said.

She said "panic buying was reported in some areas due to rumours", leading to unusually high sales and crowding at petrol pumps, even though "adequate stocks of petrol and diesel are available at all petrol pumps".

"There are enough stock of petrol and diesel and there is no shortage of any retail outlet (petrol pump). Oil terminals also have enough stocks," she said.

On LPG, the government said supply "continues to be affected due to the prevailing geopolitical situation", though no dry-outs have been reported and cylinder deliveries are continuing as normal.

Additional allocations have been made to states, with commercial LPG supply now raised to 50 per cent in phases, prioritising sectors such as restaurants, hotels and community kitchens.

To ease pressure on LPG, the government is accelerating the shift to piped natural gas (PNG), with priority allocation ensuring "100 per cent supply to domestic PNG and CNG transport", while industrial and commercial users are receiving around 80 per cent of their usual supply.

City gas distribution (CGD) companies have been di-

rected to prioritise PNG connections for households and key institutions, with incentives being offered for both domestic and commercial users. The government has also asked states to fast-track approvals for pipeline expansion and simplify right-of-way permissions.

Sharma said in the last 25 days 2.5 lakh new PNG connections have been issued and 2.20 lakh LPG consumers have shifted to PNG.

Additional measures include higher domestic LPG production, extra kerosene allocation of 48,000 kilolitres to states, and promotion of alternative fuels such as PNG, electricity and coal to reduce dependence on LPG.

States have been directed to crack down on hoarding and black marketing, with over 2,700 raids conducted, around 2,000 cylinders seized, more than 650 FIRs registered and 155 arrests made so far.

Reiterating its advisory, the government said it is making "all efforts to ensure availability of petrol, diesel and LPG" and urged citizens to rely on official information, avoid panic purchases and conserve energy.

Separately, the three oil marketing companies, in social media posts, also said that there was no shortage.

Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), the nation's largest oil firm, said, there is no shortage of petrol or diesel", adding that its outlets are "well-stocked and fully operational".

It cautioned that rumours "can create unnecessary concern and disrupt normal supply patterns" and urged citizens to "avoid panic buying and rely only on verified information".

IOC chairman A S Sahney said, "We would like to assure all citizens that there is no shortage of petrol or diesel. Indian Oil outlets nationwide are well-stocked and functioning normally." "Unverified rumours can lead to unnecessary panic and supply disruptions. Please avoid panic buying and trust only official sources. Let us act responsibly and support seamless fuel availability for all," he added.

Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) termed reports of fuel shortages in certain areas "completely unfounded", asserting that "there is no shortage of fuel across the nation".

The company said India is a net exporter of petrol and diesel and has "adequate stocks of crude oil, petrol, diesel and ATF", with supply chains operating "smoothly without any disruption".

It added that it remains "fully operational and committed to ensuring uninterrupted fuel supply".

Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) also said there is "no shortage of petrol, diesel or LPG across the country", with supplies remaining stable and stocks adequate.

It advised customers not to be misled by rumours or engage in panic buying, and to "continue with normal consumption patterns", adding that it is committed to ensuring "an uninterrupted and seamless fuel supply" across its network.

While the war in West Asia has disrupted crude oil, LNG and LPG supply chains, India with its diversified sourcing has been able to secure enough supplies of crude oil (the raw material used to make fuels like petrol and diesel) from West Africa, Latin America and the US.

The disruption in liquefied natural gas (LNG) due to India's largest supplier's facilities in Qatar being hit by the war has led to prioritisation of the fuel to domestic users and CNG, while some curtailment has been done for industrial users like fertiliser plants.

LPG is the most impacted by the war as the country relied on imports to meet 60 per cent of its demand. A majority of it came from the Gulf countries, from where supplies have been hit. This has led to the government prioritising supplies to domestic household kitchens and curtailing usage by commercial establishments such as hotels and restaurants by at least half.

Focus on ...

industrial ecosystem is changing. Therefore, keeping in view the shifts underway Jammu Kashmir's industrial landscape must continually invest in new skills to enhance productivity.

"We must train our farmers in modern technology, scientific methods, and resource management to understand climate change, water crisis, and soil quality. At the same time, we must train them to produce more crops with fewer resources and to market their products more effectively," he said.

Sinha said the administration is the backbone of any nation, and people today expect transparency, accountability, and efficiency from it.

"We must empower individuals and institutions to confront emerging challenges head-on, so that India's dream of becoming the world's greatest nation is realised. Universities and institutions must join hands with the ISTD to give shape to this resolve," the Lt Governor said.

"The real instrument of change is a trained, developed professional mind who will become the foundation of our progress, the energy behind our inclusive growth, and a real vehicle for shaping the future," he said.

Atul Shah, National President, Indian Society for Training & Development; Prof. K.S. Chandrasekar, Vice Chancellor, Cluster University of Jammu and Mentor, ISTD Jammu Chapter; Prof Ashok Aima, Chairman, ISTD Jammu Chapter; Ankita Sharma, Regional Vice-President (North), ISTD; Prof Hardeep Chahal, Vice Chairperson, Dr Shahid Mushtaq, General Secretary and other members of ISTD Jammu Chapter; senior officials, heads of educational institutions and students in large number attended the inaugural ceremony.

Trainings, Shabnam Shah Kamili, informed that the initiative marks a significant shift towards digital governance. She apprised that a dedicated online portal has been developed in collaboration with BISAG-N for updating Recruitment Rules in a streamlined and efficient manner.

She further informed that, with effect from April 1, 2026, all offline submissions of proposals for Recruitment Rules will be discontinued, and departments will be required to mandatorily route their proposals through the online portal. The portal has already been made fully operational after successful security audits and integration of SMS-based communication features. To ensure a smooth transition, four high-level training sessions have also been conducted for departmental Nodal Officers, she added.

Highlighting the progress achieved so far, it was informed that the Standing Committee constituted for the purpose has maintained a consistent pace of work, having convened 53 meetings since early 2024. Through these deliberations, Recruitment Rules for 33 services have been finalized, while preliminary drafts for 81 additional services have been prepared. Moreover, 12 services have been cleared through Executive Orders to address urgent administrative requirements.

The meeting was also apprised that these concerted efforts are aimed at clearing the existing backlog and aligning departmental structures with contemporary governance requirements and best practices.

Addressing structural gaps and pending issues, it was noted that internal audits have identified key areas requiring immediate attention, including the presence of outdated pay scales linked to the 5th and 6th Pay Commissions, as well as stagnation in "Schedule-1" post allocations.

The departments were advised to adopt uniform model Recruitment Rules for ministerial staff to bring consistency across the system. They were also instructed to clearly define parameters such as "experience" in Recruitment Rules to remove ambiguity and ensure fairness in the selection process.

The Chief Secretary issued specific directions to major departments including Health, Education, Revenue and Agriculture to resolve pending mapping issues on priority and finalise their Recruitment Rules without any further delay.

The meeting concluded with a reiteration of the Government's resolve to modernize administrative processes, enhance transparency, and ensure timely recruitment through a robust, technology-driven framework in the best interest of government employees here.

Around 40 ...

university Jammu and Srinagar have 13 and 18 teachers against 16 and 56 sanctioned posts, respectively.

Overall, the figures indicate that most universities in Jammu and Kashmir are running with shortages ranging from around 20 per cent to over 60 per cent of their sanctioned teaching strength, raising concerns over academic workload and functioning of departments.

Student enrolment data shows that universities across Jammu and Kashmir have a combined strength of more than 69,000 students, the majority of whom belong to the local category, while non-local students is numbering 3,465 including 12 foreign nationals.

The figures indicate that Cluster University Jammu and Cluster University Srinagar have the highest enrolment with 16,711 and 16,179 students respectively, followed by the University of Kashmir with 12,002 students and the University of Jammu with 3946 students.

Central University of Jammu has 3,372 students, while Central University of Kashmir has 2,592 students enrolled in different programmes. Other universities, including SKUAST-Jammu, SKUAST-Kashmir, Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University, Islamic University of Science and Technology and Mata Vaishno Devi University have 1997, 4959, 2401, 4827 and 796 students, respectively.

Data on teaching staff composition also reflects a strong local presence in most universities. At the University of Kashmir, 356 out of 373 teachers are locals, while the University of Jammu has 198 local teachers out of 252 in position. SKUAST-Kashmir has 378 local teachers out of 424, and SKUAST-Jammu has 146 locals out of 237 teachers.

In contrast, central universities show a higher share of non-local faculty. Central University of Jammu has 112 non-local teachers out of 160 in position, while Central University of Kashmir has 45 non-locals out of 108 teachers.

Artillery shell ..

security forces have stepped up area sanitisation and search operations in nearby forest belts to rule out the presence of any more unexploded ordnance.

Residents living in adjoining villages were advised to remain cautious and immediately report any suspicious objects. Police reiterated that such remnants are often found in forward areas due to past cross-border shelling incidents.

Further details are awaited.

Sanasar Tulip ...

visitors. The MLA interacted with the officers and sought details regarding the development, maintenance and future expansion plans of the garden. He also engaged with tourists present at the site and gathered feedback about their experience.

Interacting with the visitors, the MLA noted that the tourist footfall has been steadily increasing in Sanasar after the establishment of the Tulip Garden. He expressed optimism that a large number of visitors would through the destination this year too, boosting the local economy and providing livelihood opportunities to the local population.

The Director Floriculture informed that the garden, spread over 35 kanal, features a centrally located fountain and showcases more than 2 lakh tulips of 25 different varieties, making it a major attraction for nature lovers and tourists alike.

As the garden was declared open, enthusiastic visitors rushed in to witness the vibrant bloom and scenic beauty of the tulips. Among them, a tourist from Barcelona, Montserrat Hernandez Garcia, expressed immense joy at seeing such a wide variety of tulips and termed the experience as memorable, noting that such gardens are not found in her hometown.

The MLA invited people from across the nation and beyond to visit Sanasar and enjoy the mesmerizing beauty of the Tulip Garden.

India blasts ...

banned terrorist organization and its members," External Affairs Ministry spokesman Randhir Jaiswal said.

"Pakistan has no locus standi to comment on matters internal to India or its judicial processes. However, one is not surprised that a country, which has long been sponsoring terrorism, has come up with such a statement condoning violence and killing of innocent people," he said.

"Instead of peddling lies and frivolous narratives, Pakistan should introspect on the grave and systematic human rights violations it continues to perpetrate," Jaiswal said.

LPG supply ...

supply disruptions, including damage to liquefaction facilities in the Gulf and the continued blockage of the Strait of Hormuz.

At a media briefing, Sujata Sharma, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, said the entity authorised or holding a license to retail CNG and PNG in a geographical area (GA) will send notices to LPG users living in areas with PNG availability.

Such users are expected to switch to PNG within three months, failing which LPG supplies will be snapped, she said.

The Natural Gas and Petroleum Products Distribution Order, 2026 provides a "streamlined and time-bound framework" to speed up pipeline laying and expand gas infrastructure, particularly in residential areas, to enhance last-mile connectivity and support a transition to cleaner fuels, she said.

LPG supply could be discontinued in areas where PNG is available if consumers do not switch within a stipulated period, as part of efforts to free up LPG for regions without pipeline access.

Commenting on the order, Oil Secretary Neeraj Mittal in the post on X said "a crisis (has been) turned into an opportunity" through the ease of doing business reforms."

The order, issued under the Essential Commodities Act, seeks to fast-track pipeline infrastructure by easing approvals, standardising charges and ensuring time-bound permissions.

To facilitate rapid rollout, public authorities must grant right of way or permissions within prescribed timelines, failing which approvals will be deemed granted. The order also bars authorities from imposing charges beyond those specified.

In housing areas, entities controlling access must grant permissions within three working days, and last-mile PNG connectivity is to be provided within 48 hours. Applications for pipeline connectivity in such areas cannot be rejected.

The order further provides for intervention by designated officers with powers akin to a civil court to resolve disputes

over land access and grant right of way where necessary.

Authorised entities must begin laying pipelines within four months of approval or face penalties, including possible loss of exclusivity.

The Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) has been designated as the nodal agency to monitor implementation, including tracking approvals, rejections and compliance.

In case the right of way or right of use permission to lay pipeline to residences for supply of PNG is not granted by the entities that control access to the housing complex, a notice will be issued and three months thereafter oil marketing companies will stop supply of LPG.

Listing out "consequences of households not applying for and obtaining PNG connection when notified by authorised entity" that has laid a pipeline to supply such fuel, it said, "The LPG supply to such an address shall cease after three months from the date of the communication.

"The supply of LPG to a household shall not cease, if the authorised entity issues a no-objection certificate (NOC) on the ground that it is technically infeasible to provide a piped natural gas connection or gas supply to such household," it said.

The authorised entity shall maintain records of the reasons for such technical infeasibility and withdraw the NOC as and when it is able to provide and operationalise the piped gas connectivity to such households.

J&K Bank ...

Mohammad Muzaffar, Zonal Coordinator Kaiser Ahmad Tantray, besides various Branch Heads, Manager Advances of respective branches, and officials from PNB MetLife.

The recipients of the claims expressed their gratitude towards J&K Bank and its insurance partner PNB MetLife for their prompt support. "We are thankful to the Bank for insuring these loans and greatly appreciate the timely settlement of claims. PNB MetLife's support has also been crucial in lifting the heavy financial burden during this difficult time faced by our family," said one of the claimants.

Speaking on the occasion, Zonal Head (Baramulla) Tanveer Ahmad Najar emphasized the importance of loan insurance, particularly in mitigating financial stress for families during challenging times. "When customers face hardships, it is our duty to ease their burden. By securing loans through Met Loan & Life Suraksha, we safeguard the financial interests of all stakeholders involved."

Present on the occasion, Associate Director & Relationship Head – PNB MetLife Irfan Ali Zargar remarked, "Every policy we issue carries a promise to be there for our customers when they need us most. Our customers place their trust in us to protect their future and support their families. These are the moments that matter. And these moments are why we exist."

Naib Tehsildar ...

the trap team, the spokesman said.

A search of the accused's residential house was also conducted in the presence of Executive Magistrates and independent witnesses, he said.

Further investigation in the instant case is underway, the spokesman added.

Sinha, Omar...

values in our daily lives and selflessly serve the humanity. I pray that Prabhu Shri Ram shower his divine blessings upon us in the years ahead, and may this auspicious Ram Navami fill every home with enduring peace, boundless joy, and abundant prosperity."

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has conveyed his heartfelt greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the auspicious occasion of Ram Navami.

In his message, the Chief Minister described Shri Ram as the embodiment of righteousness, virtue and exemplary conduct.

Underscoring the timeless relevance of Shri Ram's life and teachings, the Chief Minister remarked that his ideals serve as a guiding light, encouraging people to walk the path of righteousness and selfless service.

He further noted that Ram Navami is not merely a religious celebration, but also an occasion to reaffirm our shared commitment to the service of humanity with sincerity and dedication.

The Chief Minister prayed for peace, prosperity and well-being of all the people of Jammu and Kashmir and extended his warm wishes to those celebrating the sacred festival.

JAMMU: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today extended his warm greetings to the people on the auspicious occasion of Ram Navami.

He said that the festival holds immense religious and cultural significance and is celebrated with great fervour and devotion across Jammu and Kashmir.

Deputy Chief Minister expressed hope that the sacred occasion would usher in the blessings of Lord Rama, bringing peace, prosperity, and well-being to all.

Meanwhile, Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo today extended warm greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the auspicious occasion of Rama Navami.

In her message, the Minister highlighted that Ram Navami symbolizes the principles of righteousness, compassion, truth, and devotion, that continue to inspire generations. She noted that such sacred occasions reinforce the spirit of harmony, mutual respect and cultural unity that has long defined the social fabric of Jammu and Kashmir.

Additionally, The Minister also prayed for peace, progress and prosperity of entire Jammu and Kashmir.

Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Transport, Youth Services & Sports, IT and Science & Technology, Satish Sharma, today extended warm greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the auspicious occasion of Ram Navami.

In his message, the Minister highlighted the immense religious and cultural significance of the festival, which commemorates the birth of Lord Ram, an embodiment of righteousness, virtue and ideal leadership. He said that Lord Ram's life and teachings continue to serve as a guiding force for the humanity, inspiring people to uphold truth, justice, compassion and humility in all spheres of life.

Satish Sharma said that Ram Navami is not merely a religious festival but a celebration of timeless values that foster harmony, discipline and ethical conduct in society. He emphasized that the ideals of "Ram Rajya" symbolize good governance, equality and welfare of all, which remain relevant even in the present times.

70-yr Pak ...

him, they added.

Officials further informed that the intruder surrendered on being challenged without any resistance, and later his preliminary questioning revealed that he had inadvertently crossed the border.

The BSF accordingly established contact with their Pakistani counterparts, and Hussain was handed over to the Rangers around 7 pm, the officials said.

Further details are awaited till the filing of this story,