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Satya is ...

scholars welcomed his statements with openness. Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind president Arshad Madani urged that misunderstandings on both sides must be cleared. Maulana Khalid Rashid Firangi Mahali, a respected cleric from Uttar Pradesh, applauded Bhagwat’s refusal to push for movements around Kashi and Mathura — a stand that signals maturity, especially after the bitter lessons of Ayodhya. “The country has already suffered due to the Babri Masjid issue,” Mahali reminded, “and such disputes must not be repeated.”

It is telling that Muslim leaders saw Bhagwat’s words not as rhetoric, but as reassurance. At a time when polarisation has too often defined political debates, here was a moment where the head of the RSS was being welcomed for calling for inclusivity and restraint.

As the Sangh completes 100 years, Bhagwat’s discourse is likely to be remembered as more than a ceremonial statement. It was a summing up of a lifetime spent in the movement — he himself having given 75 years to the organization — but also a projection of what lies ahead. The critics who have for decades accused the RSS of one-dimensional thinking may now find their objections losing ground. The organization has shown, through words and actions, that it is capable of adapting to the complexity of India’s present without abandoning the essence of Sanatan.

The resonance of Bhagwat’s words among Muslim clerics, community leaders, and even political voices suggests that a new chapter may be opening. For too long, distrust has been the defining note of Hindu–Muslim relations in the public sphere. But when the head of the Sangh says, “We are already one,” and when respected Muslim leaders respond by calling for unity and progress, it is a signal that the ground is shifting.

At its heart, Sanatan is all about continuity, inclusivity, and resilience. It survives not by rejecting difference, but by assimilating it. In an age of global fragmentation, where identities are hardened into walls, Sanatan offers a civilizational model of coexistence. That, perhaps, is why Bhagwat’s remarks matter beyond India. They reflect a truth that Bharat has carried for millennia: that unity does not mean uniformity, and diversity does not mean division.

As the centenary of the RSS is marked in history, Bhagwat’s speech will be remembered not just as a speech, but as a reminder of a civilizational truth. The task ahead is not to prove unity, but to practice trust. For in trust lies the strength of Sanatan, and in Sanatan lies the enduring truth of Bharat.

HM Shah ...

that Shah is likely to reach the Raj Bhavan in Jammu on August 31, where he will chair a joint meeting of officers to review the overall situation, including the damage caused by flash floods in the border areas.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and senior civil and police officers, among others, will attend the meeting to brief the home minister, they said.

Before returning to Delhi on Monday, Shah is likely to conduct an aerial survey of the flood-affected areas, including the border outposts and fencing, the officials said.

On August 24, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh visited Jammu to take stock of the situation after flashfloods triggered by a cloudburst wreaked havoc at Chisoti village in Kishtwar district.

However, Singh’s plan to visit the village en route the Machail Mata shrine could not materialise in view of inclement weather and blocking of the road by a fresh landslide in the Paddar sub-division. Sixty-five persons, mostly pilgrims, were killed and over 100 injured after the cloudburst hit Chisoti on August 14.

Seven persons, including five children, died and several others were injured in flash floods in Kathua district three days later, while 34 pilgrims lost their lives and 20 others sustained injuries in a landslide on the Vaishno Devi route in Reasi district on Tuesday.

In response to the emergency caused by heavy rains, floods and disruption of train services, a dedicated help desk has been established at Jammu Tawi railway station.

Multiple government agencies on Friday intensified rescue, restoration and rehabilitation operations in Jammu and Samba districts to clear several low-lying localities of debris and reconnect them with water, power and road networks, officials said.

After record rainfall wreaked havoc in the Jammu region over the past two days, the death toll in rain-related incidents has risen to 45, with 34 of them being victims of the landslide on the Vaishno Devi pilgrimage route. Twenty others were injured.

Men and machinery of the Public Works Department and Jammu Municipal Corporation have been pressed into service in low-lying areas to clear debris, mud and stranded vehicles.

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh visited flood-hit areas along the highway in Udhampur, while Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary reached out to people in affected parts of Jammu to supervise relief operations being conducted by the administration.

Similarly, minister Javed Rana undertook a comprehensive tour of flood-affected villages in the Jammu region, including Bхарmini, Ghura, Sarari, Bathindi, Sunjwan and Chatha, to assess the on-ground situation and oversee relief and rehabilitation measures.

Top officials, including deputy commissioners and commissioners, also visited affected areas and directed agencies to restore all essential facilities.

Rana visited the relief camp at Dongi Higher Secondary School, where several families displaced from Bхарmini village have been temporarily sheltered. He interacted with the affected families to understand their concerns first-hand and reviewed the facilities and arrangements at the camp.

Minister Satish Sharma extensively visited the flood-affected areas in Khour sub-division, covering Dhar Khour, Channi Dawnoo, Thangar and Block Samwan, to assess the damage caused by recent floods and oversee ongoing relief and rehabilitation measures.

Reports suggest that connectivity to nearly 50 villages has been disrupted due to the downpour and flash floods.

Over 12,000 people were evacuated from flood-hit areas during rescue operations. As waters began to recede, many residents rushed back to their inundated homes to clear out floodwater and resume normal life, the officials said.

The water levels of major rivers, including Tawi, Chenab, Basantar, Ravi, and Ujh, have receded, bringing the much-needed relief to people in Jammu, Samba and Kathua districts.

However, extensive damage has been reported to public infrastructure — bridges, private houses, and commercial establishments — due to overflowing rivers and flash floods across the Union Territory. Northern Railways cancelled 45 trains to and from Jammu and Katra on August 30.

The Jammu-Srinagar national highway, the only all-weather road linking Kashmir with the rest of the country, remain closed for fourth straight day, after being blocked by multiple landslides at several places between Jakheni and Chenani in Udhampur on Tuesday following heavy rains and flash floods.

“Highway is closed for the fourth day. No vehicular movement shall be allowed from Nagrota in Jammu towards Reasi, Chenani, Patnitop, Doda, Ramban, Banihal and Srinagar,” a traffic police official said.

Authorities have advised commuters belonging to Katra and Udhampur towns to keep their photo ID cards to prove their identity so that their movement can be facilitated smoothly.

Apart from this, nine inter-district roads in Jammu region are shut due to landslides and road erosion. Dozens of villages in Jammu, Samba, Kathua and Udhampur have been cut off due to damage caused by heavy rains, flash floods and landslides, they said.

The men and machines of the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) are working to clear the highway of blockades, which occurred on Tuesday following heavy rains and flash floods, they said.

Due to the closure of the highway, over 2,000 vehicles are stranded at various places en route, including Lakhanpur, Kathua, Jammu, Nagrota, Udhampur.

The pilgrimage to the Vaishno Devi shrine also remained suspended for the fourth consecutive day. The Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB), which manages the Yatra, suspended the pilgrimage on Tuesday until further orders.

“Inclement weather conditions still persist, so a decision has been taken to continue the suspension of the Yatra in view of pilgrim safety,” an official said.

Katra and Trikuta hills, on which the Vaishno Devi Shrine is located, have been witnessing heavy rain since Friday morning. The downpour didn’t stop till reports last came in.

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary on Friday urged PM Modi and HM Shah to grant Rs 1.60 lakh crore relief package to the Jammu region.

He said this is the worst catastrophe in 100 years that Jammu has faced, resulting in widespread destruction.

“The damage is so immense that today I will appeal to the prime minister and the home minister of the country to announce a major package, because this time Jammu has witnessed an even greater floods than Kashmir in 2014, which has caused massive destruction. A package worth more than Rs 80,000 crore is needed here. And this package should directly reach people’s bank accounts,” Choudhary told reporters here.

Choudhary, who undertook a whirlwind visit of flood-affected areas in Jammu, said, “Our demand is that this time, Jammu province, which has suffered a fresh tragedy due to floods, should be given double the package of what was announced for Kashmir in 2014.”

He suggested that BJP legislators take up the matter with New Delhi. “I want to tell BJP legislators clearly that they must go to Delhi and ensure that double the package of what Kashmir received in 2014 is brought for the people of Jammu,” he said.

The deputy chief minister said that when floods struck Kashmir in 2014, there was a PDP-BJP government in Jammu and Kashmir and the Modi government in Delhi. “At that time, a package of Rs 80,000 crore was announced. But the money given by the central government never reached the people. Even today, if you ask them, they (people) say they did not receive it. This time, the relief amount that is formulated should go directly into their accounts.”

Meanwhile, Indian Army engineers, in a 12-hour-long operation, laid a 110-foot Bailey bridge connecting the flood-hit Tawi bridge to restore vehicular traffic on the vital link in Jammu city.

Heavy rain in Jammu had damaged the road near the fourth Tawi bridge as the river swelled, causing vehicles to get stuck on the broken stretch on August 26.

“Engineers of the Tiger Division began work this morning to connect the road with the Tawi bridge,” an army officer said.

He said that severely damaged by floods, the eastern span of the Tawi bridge was revived, as engineers laid the Bailey bridge in just 12 hours, overcoming washed-out approaches and limited workspace, and restoring vehicular movement under challenging conditions.

By this evening, traffic was restored, he said. Thousands of people use this bridge to commute daily. In the 2024 floods, the bridge had suffered damage at the same spot and was later repaired.

Sinha sets ...

appropriate SOPs and measures for preventing recurrence of such incidents, it added.

“The committee will submit its report within two weeks to the chairman of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board,” the order said.

A partial strike was observed in Katra on Thursday as a mark of respect and solidarity with the deceased pilgrims, with hundreds of people taking out a march to criticise the Shrine Board over the tragic incident.

“The tragedy shows the incompetence of the Shrine Board, which allowed the Yatra despite weather warnings,” former J-K minister Jugal Kishore Sharma said, alleging that the track was developed in a highly-unplanned manner.

Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) general secretary Karan Singh, who was also part of the protest march in Katra, accused the Shrine Board of over-commercialising the pilgrimage, and requested it not to play with the “sanctity of the holy shrine”.

On August 27, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah asked why officials of the Shrine Board, which is under the administrative control of the LG, did not stop pilgrims from treading the track when there was a warning of the calamity.

“When we knew about the weather, should we not have taken certain steps to save lives? The weather warning had come to us a few days ago,” Abdullah said.

Posing questions to the officials, he added, “Why were these people on the track? Why were they not stopped? Why were they not moved to a safe place? This has to be discussed later. We feel sorrow over the loss of precious lives.”

In a late night statement on Thursday, the Shrine Board refuted allegations of allowing the Yatra to proceed in disregard of weather advisories and at the cost of pilgrim safety, saying the pilgrimage was suspended at noon on August 26 ahead of the cloudburst that triggered the landslide.

However, the Board did not share details about the number of deaths caused by the disaster.

After visiting Katra on August 27, Sinha had said, “This has been a very unfortunate incident. Around noon yesterday, a cloudburst occurred when the Yatra was already suspended.

Due to the cloudburst, several people were swept away by the waters. Many precious lives have been lost, and several others have been injured.”

Ban on ...

recounted once a self-styled godman started writing books “left and right” about every religion and created problems for courts.

Hegde referred to Section 98 of the BNSS and said the provision operates all India which was the problem.

“Under the provision, an official of a small state can declare a book to be obscene and then the books can be forfeited from all over the country. This is overboard,” he submitted.

The bench said the court had seen the list of 25 books and it would like to have the benefit of the high court’s view in the matter.

The plea filed through advocate Ibad Mustaq challenged the vires of Section 98 of the BNSS and the August 5 notification issued by the Government of Jammu and Kashmir, declaring-en masse publication of 25 notable books and their copies or other documents to be forfeited to the government.

“The present challenge is premised on the fundamental right to freedom of expression under Article 19; the right to equality under Article 14; and the right to life with dignity as well as the right to privacy under Article 21, being violated by the government’s en masse measure to order forfeiture of notable works most of which have been in publication and circulation for decades and are published by reputable publishers - by terming them as ‘false narratives and secessionist literature... often disguised as historical or political commentary’, ” the plea said.

The plea went on, “This vagueness, it is highlighted, allows for arbitrary and subjective application, as demonstrated in the impugned notification dated August 5, 2025 where diverse works — including academic research, historical accounts, and feminist narratives — have been lumped together under the sweeping label of ‘secessionist literature’” without any pinpointed reference to offending matter.”

The August 5 ban on books includes those written by famous authors like Moulana Moudadi, Arundhati Roy, A G Noorani, Victoria Schofield and David Devadas.

The move to ban the books drew flak from their authors and a section of political leaders who claimed it was an attempt “to warn Kashmiris against free speech” and asserted democracy thrives on the free exchange of ideas.

The order of the J-K government said available evidence based on investigations and “credible intelligence unflinchingly” indicated a significant driver behind youth participation in violence and terrorism was the “systematic dissemination of false narratives and secessionist literature” by its persistent internal circulation, often disguised as historical or political commentary.

It plays a critical role in misguiding the youth, glorifying terrorism and inciting violence against India, the order added.

The books include ‘Al Jihadol fil Islam’ by Islamic scholar and founder of Jamaat-e-Islami, Moulana Moudadi, ‘Independent Kashmir’ by Australian author Christopher Sneden, ‘In Search of a Future (The Story of Kasimир)’ by David Devadas, ‘Kashmir in Conflict (India, Pakistan and the unending War)’ by Victoria Schofield, ‘The Kashmir Dispute (1947-2012)’ by A G Noorani, and ‘Azadi’ by Arundhati Roy.

Triumph of ...

contribution in the Make in India campaign. Making a special mention of the country’s defence sector, she said, Operation Sindoor is a golden chapter in humanity’s victory against terrorism.

“This operation completely destroyed terrorist camps and thwarted attempts to attack India. The indigenous Akashteer Air Defence Control and Reporting System displayed infallible capability. Public sector enterprises contributed to building this system. This is a matter of great pride for them,” she said.

The President asserted that PSUs’ contribution has been proven in achieving self-reliance on national security via innovation and India’s growing technical expertise. Public sector enterprises have played a crucial role in sectors including agriculture, mining and exploration, manufacturing, processing and services, she said.

Murmu further pointed out that women-led development is one of the government’s national priorities, asserting that women leaders have to overcome multiple challenges.

Important for ...

positive progress has been made in our bilateral ties.” Stable, predictable, and amicable bilateral relations between India and China, as two neighbours and the two largest nations on earth, can have a positive impact on regional and global peace and prosperity, he said.

This is also crucial for a multi-polar Asia and a multi-polar world, he added.

“Given the current volatility in world economy, it is also important for India and China, as two major economies, to work together to bring stability to the world economic order,” Modi said.

India is ready to advance bilateral relations from a strategic and long-term perspective on the basis of mutual respect, mutual interest and mutual sensitivity, and to enhance strategic communication to address our developmental challenges, he said.

On his views on the Japanese government’s concept of a free and open Indo-Pacific, Modi said there is a strong convergence between Japan’s vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific and India’s own approach encapsulated in our Indo-Pacific vision, in the ‘Vision MAHASAGAR’ and the Indo-Pacific Oceans’ Initiative.

India and Japan are committed to an Indo-Pacific that is peaceful, prosperous, stable and where the territorial integrity and sovereignty of nations are respected, the prime minister said.

“Both our countries have strong and extensive linkages with countries in the Indo-Pacific region, and we both engage with some of them in plurilateral formats to give expression to our shared objectives,” he said.

Talking about his recent conversations with the leaders of Russia and Ukraine, Modi said India has maintained a principled and humanitarian stance on the conflict, which is equally appreciated by both President Vladimir Putin and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

“In line with this, both the leaders spoke to me to share their perspectives on the developments related to the conflict. I reiterated India’s principled and consistent stand and encouraged dialogue and diplomacy to resolve the conflict. I have already indicated India’s willingness to support meaningful efforts aimed at achieving peaceful resolution of the con-

flict,” he told the Japanese newspaper.

“I believe, by virtue of our good relations with both sides, including key stakeholders, we can strengthen efforts dedicated to the restoration of an early and lasting peace in Ukraine,” Modi said.

Stressing the importance of the Global South, Modi said the global community has made a commitment to create a more equitable world through achieving Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

“If we have to live up to this commitment, then the Global South must be given priority. In a highly interconnected world, we have seen the debilitating impact of the pandemic, conflicts and supply chain disruptions on the Global South,” the prime minister said.

They continue to face myriad challenges involving global governance, climate change, food and energy security, debt and financial stress, all having a significant impact on their development priorities, he said.

“As members of the Global South, we clearly understand these concerns and their effects on people’s lives. We have made strenuous efforts to bring these to the forefront of the global agenda,” he said.

“All our global initiatives, like Mission LiFE, Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, International Solar Alliance, Global Biofuels Alliance, focus on promoting the interests of the Global South. Our G20 Presidency saw the inclusion of the African Union and gave voice to the aspirations of the Global South,” Modi pointed out.

Similarly, in BRICS, India is actively engaged in working toward the benefit of the Global South, he added.

India attaches importance to its engagement with BRICS, which has emerged as a valuable forum for consultation, and cooperation and has helped promote mutual understanding, on a specific set of issues of common interest to emerging economies, he said.

Under the rubric of the Quad, he said they have worked for the development and progress of the countries in the Indo-Pacific.

“India has also consistently called for urgent and comprehensive reforms of the global multilateral institutions to make them more effective and reflective of the current geopolitical and economic realities,” he said.

He pointed out that in the last 20 years, since its inception in 2004, the Quad has emerged as a force of global good, delivering positive outcomes for the people of the Indo-Pacific region.

Meanwhile, in Tokyo, PM Modi said that India is the fastest growing major economy and its political and economic stability as well as transparency in policies have made it an attractive investment destination, especially in areas of green energy, manufacturing and technology.

Modi’s remarks at a business forum shortly after landing in Tokyo on a two-day trip came amid fears of adverse impact of Washington’s 50 per tariffs against India on the country’s economy.

In his address, Modi said Japan’s technology and India’s talent together can lead the technology revolution of this century and can contribute significantly to Asia’s stability, growth and prosperity.

The prime minister said Japanese companies have invested more than USD 40 billion in India, including USD 13 billion in the past two years as he highlighted the country’s remarkable changes in the last 11 years.

“Today, we have political and economic stability, and clear and predictable policies. India is now the fastest-growing major economy in the world, and very soon, it will become the world’s third-largest economy,” he said.

“India is contributing to 18 per cent of global growth. The country’s capital markets are giving good returns, and we have a strong banking sector. Inflation and interest rates are low, and foreign exchange reserves stand at around USD 700 billion,” he said at the India-Japan Economic Forum.

Modi identified manufacturing, technology and innovation, green energy, next-generation infrastructure, and skill development and people-to-people ties as the main focus of cooperation between the two sides.

“India and Japan’s partnership is strategic and smart. Powered by economic logic, we have turned shared interests into shared prosperity,” he said.

Describing Japan as a “tech powerhouse” and India as a “talent powerhouse”, Modi said the two countries can lead the technology revolution of this century, especially in areas of artificial intelligence, semiconductors, quantum computing, biotech and space.

Modi said Japan has always been a key partner in India’s growth journey -- whether it is metro networks, manufacturing, semiconductors, or start-ups.

“Japan’s technology and India’s talent together can lead the tech revolution of this century,” he said.

Modi also elaborated on possible cooperation in the clean energy sector.

“India is quickly moving towards 500 GW (gigawatts) of renewable energy by 2030. We also aim for 100 GW of nuclear power by 2047. From solar cells to green hydrogen, there are huge opportunities for partnership,” he said.

An agreement has been reached between India and Japan on a joint credit mechanism and this can be used to cooperate in building a clean and green future, he said.

The prime minister also spoke on next-gen infrastructure that the two countries can work on.

“In the last decade, India has made unprecedented progress in next generation mobility, and logistics infrastructure. The capacity of our ports has doubled.”

“There are more than 160 airports. Metro lines of a 1,000 km have been built. Work is also underway on the Mumbai-Ahmedabad high-speed rail in cooperation with Japan,” he noted.

“Japan’s excellence and India’s scale can create a perfect partnership,” he said.

In the field of skill development, India’s skilled workers have the capability to meet global needs, the prime minister said.

“Japan can also benefit from this. You could train Indian talent in Japanese language and soft skills, and together create a ‘Japan-ready’ workforce. A shared workforce will lead to shared prosperity,” he said.

The prime minister also made a mention of various reform measures that his government has rolled out, adding the approach has been to “reform, perform, and transform”. “In 2017, we introduced ‘One Nation–One Tax’, and now we are working on bringing in new and bigger reforms in it. A few weeks ago, our Parliament also approved the new and simplified Income Tax code,” he said.

Modi said his government’s reforms are not limited to the tax system alone and it has emphasised on ease of doing business as well.

“We have established a single digital window approval for businesses. We have rationalised 45,000 compliances. A high-level committee on de-regulation has been formed to speed up this process.”

“Sensitive sectors like defence and space have been opened up to the private sector. Now, we are also opening up the nuclear energy sector,” he said.