

Rajnath to unveil strategic Shayok Tunnel among 125 BRO Projects worth Rs 4,737 Cr

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LEH: In what is being hailed as a watershed moment for India's frontier infrastructure, Defence Minister Mantri Rajnath Singh will dedicate 125 Border Roads Organisation (BRO) projects constructed at a total cost of ₹4,737 crore to the nation on December 7.

But among these major national assets, one project stands above the rest, capturing both strategic urgency and emotional resonance: the Shayok Tunnel in Ladakh.

Rajnath Singh's presence in Ladakh for the inauguration of the Shayok Tunnel is no ordinary official visit. It underscores the region's growing prominence in India's defence architecture and reflects the government's commitment to transforming Ladakh's connectivity challenges into opportunities for long-term growth and security.

For decades, the high passes leading to the Nubra



and Shyok valleys have been at the mercy of brutal winters, avalanches, and unpredictable closures that cripple civilian life and complicate military logistics.

The Shayok Tunnel rewrites that story. Its inauguration by the Defence Minister marks the beginning of a new era of year-round mobility, bringing relief to thousands of residents who have

endured months of isolation every winter.

For Rajnath Singh, who has repeatedly emphasised the need for robust border infrastructure, the tunnel stands as a powerful symbol of India's preparedness in the northern sector.

The Defence Minister has often asserted that development in border regions must move hand-in-hand with

strategic strengthening. His unveiling of the Shayok Tunnel gives that philosophy concrete form: a project that secures the frontier while uplifting an entire population.

Strategically, the tunnel offers the Armed Forces enhanced mobility to forward posts near the Line of Actual Control. For the people of Ladakh, it means improved access to healthcare, ►P11

Ladakh University plans Dual Degree and Integrated Security Programmes

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LEH: A new academic collaboration between the University of Ladakh and Rashtriya Raksha University is set to introduce integrated postgraduate programs in forensic science and criminology along with a dual degree in maritime studies, marking a major academic expansion for Ladakhi students aspiring for careers in national security, investigative sciences and coastal safety.

The initiative emerged from detailed discussions held in Leh on Friday, paving the way for a formal Memorandum of Understanding likely to be signed soon.

The initiative, discussed during a detailed meeting of senior delegations from both sides in Leh, is designed to equip women with practical emergency-response skills, leadership abilities and employment-ready competencies in fire safety — a sector with expanding opportunities across the country.

Officials stated that the program aligns with national efforts to boost women's participation in safety, policing and disaster-management services.

The wider partnership seeks to introduce new academic formats including integrated postgraduate courses in Forensic Science and Criminology. These programs are expected to offer students an interdisciplinary route into crime investigation, forensic technologies, legal processes and national security studies at a time when specialized expertise in these fields is increasingly sought after by institutions and industry.

Additionally, the two universities are exploring a dual degree program in Maritime Studies, aimed at expanding knowledge in maritime law, port security, coastal infrastructure and oceanic safety. The proposal reflects a drive to diversify academic exposure for Ladakhi students, allowing them to access niche yet globally relevant sectors beyond conventional career paths.

ways in the Himalayan region.

As an immediate step, students from the Department of Forensic Science at the University of Ladakh will undertake their upcoming winter internship at RRU, where they will learn under expert guidance and observe operations in advanced laboratories and field-training environments. A joint workshop on forensic skill development and research exchange is also on the agenda.

The University of Ladakh delegation was led by Vice Chancellor Professor Saket Kushwaha, who reiterated the institution's drive to strengthen academic infrastructure and empower local youth through exposure to emerging disciplines.

He was joined by deans overseeing academics, research, sciences and student welfare, along ►P11

Wintervacation advanced: Schools shut from Dec 11

LEH: The Administration of the Union Territory of Ladakh has advanced the winter vacation schedule for all Government and Private schools in Leh district, announcing that institutions will now close from 11 December 2025.

The updated order was issued today through a corrigendum released by the Chief Education Officer (CEO) Leh, modifying the earlier directive dated December 4.

According to the corrigendum, 10 December 2025 will be the last working day for all schools in the district.

The winter break will continue for nearly three months, with schools scheduled to reopen on 2 March 2026.

The revised schedule comes as temperatures in Leh continue to plummet, with severe cold conditions prompting authorities to align vacation timings with the region's extreme winter climate. ►P11

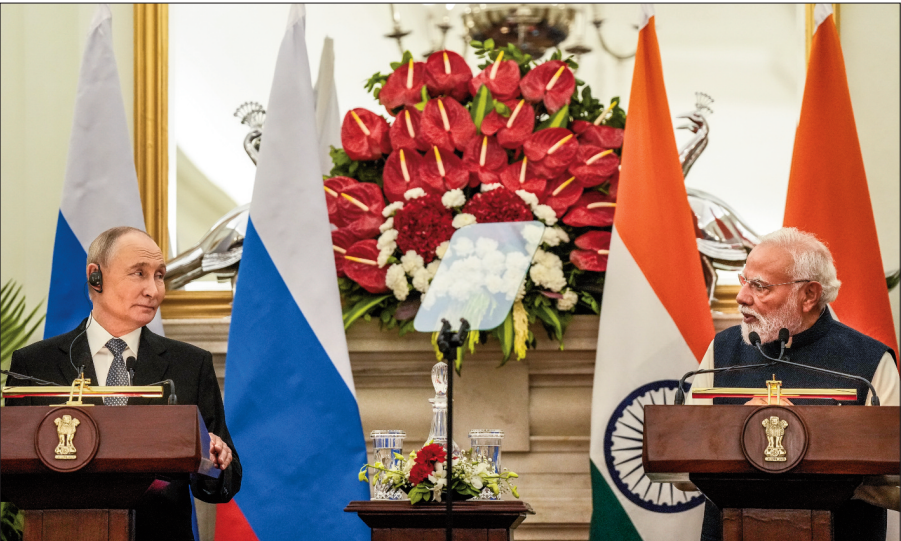
Modi, Putin discuss ways to combat terrorism; Call for uncompromising global fight against it

India-Russia to achieve USD 100 bn bilateral trade target before 2030: Modi

NEW DELHI: India and Russia on Friday called for an "uncompromising" global fight against terrorism without "hidden agendas and double standards" with Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserting that the menace is a direct attack on the values of humanity.

At their summit talks, Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin condemned the terror attacks in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam and Moscow's Crocus City Hall and strongly pitched for a "zero tolerance" policy on terrorism.

The two leaders voiced their strong commitment to prevent and counter terror-



ism in all its forms including cross-border movement of terrorists and terror financing.

"India and Russia have long cooperated shoulder-to-shoulder in the fight against terrorism. Be it the terrorist attack in Pahalgam or the cowardly attack on Crocus City Hall -- the root of all these incidents is the same," he said.

"India firmly believes that terrorism is a direct attack on the values of humanity and that global unity against it is our greatest strength," he said.

The Russian president landed in New Delhi last evening to a ►P11

Ladakh's youngest learners get their 1st Bhoti Textbooks

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

LEH: In a landmark event for the preservation and promotion of Ladakh's linguistic heritage, the new Bhoti language textbooks for Balvatika 1, 2, 3, and Grade 1st and 2d were officially released Friday.

The ceremony was held at the Purple Studio, District Institute of Education and Training (DIET), Leh.

The event was graced by the Chief Guest, Bhanu Prabha (IAS), Administrative Secretary, School Education, UT Ladakh, and the Guest of Honour, Tashi Dolma (JKAS), Director, School Education, UT Ladakh. They presided over the release in the presence of distinguished Bhoti language scholars, edu-



cators, and the dedicated faculty of DIET, Leh.

This release marks a significant leap forward in implementing National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in Ladakh, emphasizing the integration of mother tongues in foundational education.

The meticulously designed textbooks aim to pro-

vide young learners with a strong base in the Bhoti language and script.

The contributions of the scholarly team, led by Maryul Stanzin Nurbo, the principal designer of the textbooks, were celebrated and applauded by all attendees.

The collective effort of the contributors and ►P11

J&K UTLBC holds Mega Facilitation Camps in Ramban, Kishtwar, Ganderbal, Shopian

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SRINAGAR: J&K UTLBC Friday organised Mega Facilitation Camps in the districts of Ramban, Kishtwar, Ganderbal and Shopian as part of the three-month nationwide awareness-cum-disbursement campaign "Aapki Poonji, Aapka Adhikar - Your Money, Your Right", to help citizens trace and claim their unclaimed financial assets - including dormant bank deposits, matured insurance proceeds, mutual fund units, dividends, unclaimed shares and other inactive financial instruments -

that may have accumulated over the years.

The campaign was launched by the Department of Financial Services (DFS), Ministry of Finance, Government of India, in coordination with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and other financial-sector regulators.

Senior officials from RBI, insurance companies, banks, district administrations, SEBI, PFRDA, IEPFA and other financial institutions participated from across districts, ensuring coordinated service delivery and wide outreach to the public.

Ramban Camp: The Lead

District Office (Ramban) organized a district-level Mega Facilitation Camp at the Community Hall near Raghunath Temple, which was presided over by Deputy Commissioner (Ramban) Mohammad Alyas Khan, in the presence of Lead District Manager Davinder Singh, DDC Member Renuka Katoch, LDO (RBI) Anil Kumar, and Director RSETI Harvinder Singh. The camp drew encouraging public participation along with officers from various banks, district administration, PRI representatives, and local residents.

Speaking on the ►P11

Red Fort blast: Court extends NIA custody of accused Soyab

NEW DELHI: A Delhi court on Friday extended the NIA custody of Soyab, a Faridabad resident accused of harbouring Red Fort bomber Umar-un Nabi, for 10 more days.

The probe agency produced Soyab at the Patiala House Court amid tight security on Friday upon the expiry of his previous 10-day custody, which was granted on November 26.

Media persons ►P11

DG BRO Lt. Gen. Srinivasan calls on LG, discusses key road Infra projects

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LEH: Lt. Gen. Raghu Srinivasan, Director General of the Border Roads Organisation (BRO), called on the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, at Lok Niwas, Leh, to brief him on ongoing and upcoming strategic road infrastructure projects aimed at enhancing connectivity and promoting tourism in the region.

Lt. Gen. Srinivasan informed the Lt Governor about the preparations underway for the inauguration of the Shayok Tunnel by the Defence Minister, a major milestone in Ladakh's infrastructure development. He also detailed the construction and progress being made by



BRO's key projects: Project Himank, Project Vijayak, and Project Yojak.

The Nimmo-Oadum-Darcha Road, which presents the shortest route to Ladakh from Himachal Pradesh, was highlighted as a strategic connectivity enhancement.

He further briefed on the

completion of the Tangtse-Lukung Road and noted that the Khalsar-Agham-Shayok Road is nearing completion, with only a small stretch remaining.

Lt. Gen. Srinivasan discussed an important proposal to double-lane the Lukung-Chushul Road. This initiative

aims to boost adventure tourism as well as battlefield tourism in the area, enhancing visitors' experience and access to these remote locations.

Additionally, the Lt Governor was apprised of the ongoing construction of a cafeteria by BRO along the Pangong Lake route, which will serve tourists and travellers, thereby improving tourism infrastructure.

The Lt Governor commended BRO for their exemplary work and transformative projects that have established comprehensive road connectivity across Ladakh, significantly boosting accessibility to remote areas. Earlier in the day, the LG reaffirmed the UT ►P11

Leh district attains nearly 100% Household Coverage



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LEH: The Leh district has recorded significant progress with 21,505 out of 21,688 rural households connected with Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTCs), achieving 99.15% coverage.

All schools and Anganwadi centres in the district now have 100% tap water connections. Further the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) grievance redressal system has achieved a 100% disposal rate with all 612 complaints resolved. ►P11

Rakesh prioritizes essential services, Winter readiness

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

KARGIL: To assess the functioning and progress of various departments operating in the sub-division, Deputy Commissioner Kargil, Rakesh Kumar Friday chaired a review meeting at Zanskar and emphasised essential services, Winter Preparedness and Community Support.

During the meeting, the DC conducted a department-wise review, covering Education, Rural Development, Revenue, Health, ICDS, LRLM, PHE, Power, Agriculture, Horticulture, KREDA, Social Welfare, Cooperatives and other concerned departments.

On the issue of stray dog management, the DC was informed that sterilisation is currently not feasible in the region. He directed officials to ensure availability and administration of anti-rabies vaccines as a preventive measure.

Reviewing the education sector, the DC sought details on the overall performance and percentage achievements and instructed the department to ensure steady academic progress despite harsh winter conditions.

In the power sector, he emphasised that alternate power backup systems should be used responsibly and heaters must be avoided to prevent excessive ►P11

Over 40 IndiGo flights cancelled

JAMMU: Chaotic scenes unfolded at the two commercial airports in Jammu and Kashmir on Friday after 13 IndiGo flights from Srinagar and 11 from Jammu were cancelled, prompting protests from hundreds of stranded passengers over the airline's alleged failure to respond to distress calls.

IndiGo operations continued to witness disruptions nationwide due

to pilot-rostering issues faced by the airline.

On Friday, the airline was scheduled to operate 36 flights at the Srinagar airport -- 18 inbound and 18 outbound, officials said.

However, owing to rostering issues, the IndiGo cancelled 13 arriving and as many departing flights, they said.

The cancellations led to protests against the airline by passengers who had turned up at ►P11

HOTEL AVAILABLE FOR LEASE

Green View Hotel at Upper Karzu, Leh consisting of 8 rooms is available for lease. Parties interested may contact on 9419184589/ 7006121008/ 9596661101