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EAM calls for removing non-tariff barriers, FTA conclusion

fertilisers, skill mobility, and connectivity. To institution-alise the next phase of economic partnership, the EAM out-lined three specific proposals for the commission's working groups.

Jaishankar outlined three key directions for working groups: prioritising tangible outcomes before the next ses-sion, strengthening alignment with private sector needs, and continuously identifying new avenues to de-risk and diversify economic ties.

He said, "Going forward, the effectiveness of our efforts should increase by being measured by the outcomes we de-liver. Each working group must prioritise deliverables to be achieved before the next session and actively engage in problem-solving."

Second, he called for deeper engagement with the pri-vate sector, noting, "Governments can create enabling frameworks, but it is our businesses that trade, invest, inno-vate and create jobs. Our institutional mechanisms should therefore remain closely aligned with the priorities of in-dustry. Regular interaction with businesses and industry associations will help us to identify practical bottlenecks, improve policy responsiveness and ensure that discussions remain relevant, action-oriented and commercially mean-ingful. The holding of Innoprom in India in the coming weeks is a very good signal in that regard."

Third, he highlighted the need to constantly update views and explore fresh possibilities, stating, "The complicated international scenario will constantly throw up fresh ideas because we are all focused on de-risking and diversifying. Economic demands and technology requirements will add to this mix."

Reaffirming the "resilience and adaptability" of the special and privileged strategic partnership amidst a complex global landscape, he concluded by reiterating India's com-mitment to fully utilising the IRIGC platform to realise its stated economic goals.

Further underlining the durability of bilateral ties, Jais-hankar emphasised that "the India-Russia partnership has consistently demonstrated resilience and adaptability. Even amidst a complex international landscape, our en-gagement has continued to deepen, reflecting the mutual in-terest and confidence that define our bilateral partnership."

Earlier in the day, EAM Jaishankar met with Russian President Vladimir Putin at the Kremlin in Moscow as part of his two-day official visit to the country at the invitation of First Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Denis Manturov.

Referring to the discussions between Jaishankar and Russian First Deputy Prime Minister Denis Manturov under the India-Russia Intergovernmental Commission, Rus-sian President Vladimir Putin said that the two sides had al-ready worked on several important issues.

"We are very glad to see you, esteemed Minister. I know that you and your Russian counterpart, Manturov, who heads the Russian part of the intergovernmental com-mission, have already worked hard and have undoubtedly dis-cussed the most important issues," he said.

The India-Russia Intergovernmental Commission (IRIGC) has two divisions: the Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation (IRIGC-TEC), co-chaired by External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar from India and First Deputy Prime Minister Denis Manturov from Russia; and the Military and Military-Technical Co-operation (IRIGC-M&MTC), headed by the Defence Minis-ters of the two countries.

The bilateral relationship between the two countries has remained strong and stable over the years.MEA underlined how the India-Russia partnership has been among the steadiest in the contemporary era, with a shared commit-ment to a multipolar world as well as to expanding engage-ment beyond the traditional military, nuclear and space co-operation.

Omar gives SED 1 month to complete probe

August 15. When it will happen and under what circum-stances, leave that to me," he said.

On criticism of the government move to increase elec-tricity tariffs, he said his government had never promised that power rates would not rise. He reiterated that the gov-ernment's commitment was to provide 200 units of free electricity to the poorest households.

"I repeatedly explained in the Assembly that under the free electricity scheme, we would use solar panels to deliver this benefit to people," he said.

He argued that the tariff increase was separate from the free-power scheme and said the government had raised rates by only 6 per cent after four years.

"We are not celebrating the increase in electricity rates. It was a compulsion for us," he said, adding that lower power-sector losses would reduce the need for such measures in the future.

Meanwhile, opposition parties held protests and issued statements against the power tariff hike, terming the govern-ment move as unjust.

No major weather activity till Aug-end

During August 29 to 31, J&K would continue to experi-ence similar weather conditions. The first week of September was also likely to be hot and humid, officials said. J&K experienced heavy rains in the past few days, trig-gering landslides in hilly areas. The heavy downpour also led to flooding of Tawi and Chenab rivers, besides seasonal nallahs.

KP employees seek enhanced security

chief secretary, expressed serious concern over the safety of migrant KP employees serving under the PM package.

The forum said a threat poster purportedly issued by United Liberation Council (ULC) on August 23 had sur-faced on social media and reportedly contained threats against PM package employees.

According to the representation, the poster also men-tioned sensitive personal details, including names, resi-dential addresses and vehicle numbers of certain individ-uals.

"The authenticity of the poster is yet to be verified by police and security agencies. However, the repeated cir-culation of such threat letters and posters, particularly those containing sensitive personal information, is a mat-ter of grave concern," the forum said.

It said the matter had been brought to the notice of

the concerned police and security agencies for verifica-tion and necessary action.

3 families evacuated after land subsidence

strict, officials said. Administrative, revenue and rescue teams rushed to the affected area and shifted the affected families to safer locations.

Officials said a non-residential structure belonging to Bhagat Ram was washed away, while cracks had devel-oped in the residential houses of Chaat Ram, Chaman Lal and Bhushan Lal due to land subsidence over the past couple of days.

Officials said the exact cause of the land subsidence and cracks was yet to be established.

IT deptt asks to file ITR before Aug 31 deadline

AY 2026-27 for taxpayers with business or professional in-come who are not subject to audit. Be the tax hero who files on time," the I-T department said in a post on X.

If a taxpayer falls in non-audit category, he/she can file the applicable ITR (ITR-3, ITR-4, ITR-5 or ITR-7).

ITR-3 is filed by individuals and Hindu Undivided Fam-ilies (HUFs) with income from a proprietary business or profession.

ITR-4 is simpler form that cater to small and medium taxpayers. ITR-5 is filed by firms and Limited Liability Part-nership and Cooperative Societies. ITR-6 is filed by com-panies registered under Companies Act and ITR-7 by trusts and charitable institutions.

Sinha takes over as ED of AIIMS Jammu

and CEO of All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AI-IMS) Jammu, succeeding Prof (Dr) D N Sharma.

Dr Sinha joined AIIMS Jammu on deputation from AIIMS New Delhi, bringing a rich blend of clinical expertise, academ-ic experience and research orientation to the institution, a spokesperson of the institute said.

As professor in the Department of Medicine at AIIMS New Delhi, he has a distinguished academic and clinical background, with experience spanning patient care, teach-ing, medical training and research. His expertise is expected to bring valuable academic and scientific perspective to AI-IMS Jammu, the spokesperson said.

Under his leadership, AIIMS Jammu will be expanding and strengthening clinical services, enhancing the quality of medical education, promoting high-quality research and innovation, encouraging interdisciplinary academic col-laboration and creating greater opportunities for faculty and students to engage in impactful research, he said.

Sinha's leadership is also expected to contribute towards building a strong culture of evidence-based clinical prac-tice, academic excellence and research-driven healthcare, while further strengthening AIIMS Jammu as a centre of excellence, the official said.

He said the appointment of Sinha as executive director, AI-IMS Jammu, has been approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) for a period of three years from the date of assumption of charge, or until attaining the age of 70 years, or until further orders, whichever is ear-lier.

The tenure of Sharma as executive director and CEO con-cluded with this leadership transition. He assumed charge of AIIMS Jammu on January 10, 2026, and served the insti-tution during an important phase of its development.

SC panel to prioritise sexual assault complaints by women

Justice Bagchi also pointed out that an independent writ petition had been filed on the same cause and the committee had been asked to examine the issue.

In her submissions, Gupta referred to reports and ac-counts of alleged assaults that were circulated widely on social media and said the allegations included a lathi being jabbed into a woman's buttocks.

"I am beseeching the court to take suo motu cognisance of these instances," she said. Gupta urged that the alleged sex-ual assault cases be dealt with separately and on priority. She suggested that the court could appoint a district judge or designate another authority so that alleged victims could send complaints directly.

"I request that the sexual assault cases be taken up se-parately and that the court constitute, maybe not a committee, but appoint a district judge or designate someone so that the girls can actually send their complaints directly and those sexual assault cases can be taken up on a priority ba-sis," she said.

She said her specific concern was how the high-powered committee would receive complaints from alleged victims.

"There should be an order providing an email ID and des-ignating an officer to whom the complaints can be sent, and it should be given publicity," she submitted, saying such a mechanism would ensure that the allegations reached the com-mittee.

On August 20, the top court formed a five-member high-powered committee headed by former Supreme Court judge Justice R Subhash Reddy to examine allegations of po-lice excesses against student protesters in Delhi and violence against police personnel.

The committee also includes former Punjab and Haryana High Court Chief Justice Ravi Shankar Jha, former Delhi High Court judge Justice Shalinder Kaur, former CBI di-rector Rishi Kumar Shukla and retired Meghalaya DGP L R Bishnoi. It has been asked to examine police use of excessive force and violence against protesters, including the deploy-ment of pellet guns, as well as the alleged use of force and vi-olence by protesters against police officials and other secu-rity personnel.

The CJP-led Parliament march on July 20 saw clashes between protesters and security personnel, who used lathis and tear gas shells to disperse crowds. The student protests, which spread to several cities, centred on the demand for then Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation over irregularities in competitive examinations, including NEET.

The agitation began at Jantar Mantar on June 20 and ended on July 25 after Pradhan resigned and the govern-ment accepted the CJP's other demands.

Putin praises Modi's personal

focus on India-Russia ties

year. He made the remarks while receiving External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar at the Kremlin in Moscow during the latter's two-day official visit to Russia.

The Russian President said that India and Russia have maintained relations across virtually all areas, including govern-mental ties, interparliamentary cooperation and economic engagement, noting that the EAM's visit reflects the strong India-Russia ties that have developed over several decades.

"Your visit today underscores the level of relations that has long been established between Russia and India, over decades. We continue to work together in virtually all ar-eas. This includes government ties, interparliamentary ties, and economic cooperation," Putin said.

"We are very glad to see you, esteemed Minister. I know that you and your Russian counterpart, Manturov, who heads the Russian part of the intergovernmental commis-sion, have already worked hard and have undoubtedly dis-cussed the most important issues," he said.

Doval reaches Beijing for boundary talks amid uncertainty over Xi's visit

talks were the main channel for negotiations on the boundary issue and also serve as an important platform for communication on matters of mutual interest.

Lin said the two countries had held the 24th round of talks in August last year, during which they had candid and in-depth exchanges on the boundary question and reached a number of common understandings.

He said the 25th round would continue in-depth com-munication in the spirit of the understandings reached be-tween the leaders of the two countries, with the aim of jointly keeping the border areas peaceful and tranquil. He added that the two sides would also exchange views on bilat-eral ties and on regional and international issues.

Doval and Wang are the designated Special Representa-tives in the boundary talks mechanism, which was set up in 2003 to address the India-China boundary dispute span-ning 3,488 km.

New Delhi had earlier rejected Beijing's criticism of its decision to formally identify 27 places and geographical features in Arunachal Pradesh by their standard names, saying the state is an 'inalienable and integral' part of In-dia and that nothing can change this 'indisputable reality'. China, which claims Arunachal Pradesh as part of South Tibet, has been issuing its own set of names for the region since 2017. India described the Chinese move as 'vain and preposterous' and said such actions would not alter the 'un-deniable' reality that the state 'was, is, and will' always remain an integral part of India.

Doval's visit and the 25th round of Special Representatives talks come as both countries seek to keep communication open on the boundary issue and wider bilateral matters, even as differences over the border, Arunachal Pradesh and the broader state of ties remain in focus.

Modi govt has 'ravaged' pathway from education to employment: Cong

40 pc.Families spend their savings, students take educa-tion loans and earn degrees, only to discover that there are simply not enough jobs," Kharge said.

What happened to the promise of 2 crjobs every year? he asked.

By that promise, India should have seen 24 crjobs in 12 years, but instead, lakhs of government posts remain vac-ant while secure employment is increasingly replaced by contractual and part-time work, Kharge said.

"Who is turning India's demographic dividend into a de-mographic disaster?" he further asked.

"Expensive and inadequate education, paper leaks, de-layed recruitment, a widening skills gap and disappearing quality jobs have put the future of an entire generation at risk," he alleged.

"You (Modi) promised to achieve what previous govern-ments could not do in 70 years! You have certainly deliv-ered on that boast: an education system that costs more, infested with RSS, examinations young Indians cannot trust, and degrees that increasingly come without jobs," Kharge said.

The Aayog, in the report titled 'Reimagining Skilling for Viksit Bharat@2047', said the estimate is based on data from the 78th round of the National Sample Survey con-ducted in 2021.

To ensure the highest impact, the Aayog organised In-dia's workforce landscape and learners into five segments - schooling; tertiary education; formal and informal work; not in education, employment and training (NEET) youth; and women.

"NEET youth are constrained by the absence of income and the sunk cost of prior education.

Students often cannot layer paid skilling onto existing fi-nancial commitments," it said.

The Aayog has defined NEET youth as individuals be-tween the ages of 15 and 29 who are not engaged in educa-tion, employment or training, as well as those who are unem-ployed.

I&FC employee dismissed from service

derly in I&FC division, Poonch.

He was dismissed from service with immediate effect and permanently barred from future government employment.

"Whereas, the case of Vimal Kumar was placed before the competent authority for acceptance of the report of Inquiry-Officer, and the competent authority has, after due consid-eration, in pursuance of Rule 30 (viii) of the J&K Civil Ser-vices (Classification, Control and Appeal) Rules, 1956 read with the Article 311(2) of the Constitution of India, decided to impose the penalty of dismissal from service of the state which ordinarily disqualifies him from future employment, as his continued employment poses a grave risk to public welfare and erodes trust in government institutions," the dismissal order said.

US vows 'economic D-Day' as Iran threatens to halt all oil exports

worded statements hinting at a major military response. Mohsen Rezaei, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Se-

curity Council, on Sunday suggested economic retaliation.

"If the economic war continues, not a single drop of oil will be exported, neither through the Strait of Hormuz nor from anywhere in the Persian Gulf," Rezaei wrote in a social media post. "Iran will regard any country's participation in or support for America's economic war against the Iranian people as an act of war."

Bessent previously urged China to cooperate with the US, noting China historically has received half of its oil imports from the Gulf region. A spokesperson for China's embassy in Washington responded with a statement that "sanctions and pressure do not help resolve the problem," while calling for diplomacy.

Pakistan has been mediating in the conflict and a Pak-istani government source said Munir would touch on re-cent developments including the US threat of new sanc-tions.

ISRO, pvt industry writing India's next space chapter: Jitendra

Gaganyaan, Chandrayaan-4 and the Bharatiya Antariksh Station, as well as future missions to the Moon, Venus and Mars.

"Under PM Narendra Modi, India's space sector has taken a global trajectory by expanding from a predomi-nantly government-led programme into a wholesome ecosystem integrating ISRO, industry and space startups. In-dia's space programme is not being scaled back. It is being scaled up," he said in a post on X.

"At the same time, as India moves towards an ambition of 50 launches a year, industry has to become the manufact-urer at scale, while ISRO develops the next generation of technologies and missions. This is the natural evolution of India's space programme," Singh added.

He accused Ramesh of "running down" Indian achieve-ments and casting doubt on every step forward.

Citing the growth of the space sector and the emergence of private players, Singh said the number of foreign satellites launched by ISRO has risen from 35 before 2014 to 430 to-day, while the number of space startups has grown to around 440 from just a handful in 2014.

He noted that Sriharikota will remain at the heart of ISRO's major launch programmes, including PSLV, LVM3 and human spaceflight, while Kulasekarapattnam will add capacity for the growing small-launch sector.

"That is not ISRO versus industry. The model is ISRO and industry together. Together, they are writing the next chapter of India's space story," Singh said.

BJP national spokesperson and national media co-in-charge Pradeep Bhandari also defended the government's space sector reforms, saying the opening up of the sector has enabled private companies and startups to move from being suppliers to developers of rockets, satellites and com-plete space systems.

BJP to go solo in Punjab polls

had ended their alliance in 2020 after the Akali Dal with-drew from the BJP-led NDA over the Centre's farm laws.

Santosh is on a two-day visit to Punjab to review the party's organisational functioning and to strengthen co-ordination and preparedness at the grassroots level in the poll-bound state.

During his visit, Santosh will hold a series of zonal meet-ings with BJP leaders and organisational functionaries across the state, according to a party statement.

On Monday, Santosh chaired meetings at Patiala and Bathinda. The Patiala meeting brought together represen-tatives from Mohali, Patiala North, Patiala Urban, Patiala South, Fatehgarh Sahib and Sangrur, and the Bathinda meeting covered Barnala, Mansa, Bathinda Rural, Bathinda Urban, Muktsar Sahib, Fazilka and Faridkot, according to the statement.

On Tuesday, the BJP's organisational meetings will con-tinue in Ludhiana, Jalandhar and Amritsar.

The Ludhiana meeting will be attended by representa-tives from Ludhiana Rural, Ludhiana Urban, Moga, Ja-graon, Khanna, Malerkotla and Ropar. The Jalandhar meeting will bring together leaders from Jalandhar North, Jalandhar Urban, Jalandhar South, Hoshiarpur Urban, Hoshiarpur Rural, Nawansahr and Kapurthala.

The Punjab Assembly elections are scheduled to be held early next year, alongside elections in Uttar Pradesh, Ut-tarakhand, Goa and Manipur. In the 2022 Assembly elec-tions, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) registered a landslide victory, winning 92 of the state's 117 seats, while the Congress was reduced to 18 seats.

EVMs not connected to Internet, Bluetooth or Wi-Fi: CEC

thenticity," Kumar stated.

Reflecting on his own student days in 1979, he shared fond memories of his teachers and school, highlighting their significant role in shaping his journey.

Recalling the period when he was preparing to go to the United States, Kumar said his mother's wish and his at-tachment to the motherland motivated him to stay in In-dia and pursue public service.

He subsequently cleared the civil services examination and began his administrative career in the Kerala cadre of the Indian Administrative Service.

He said his journey in public service eventually led him to the role of Chief Election Commissioner in the world's largest democracy.

Highlighting the scale of India's electoral exercise, Ku-mar said the country has around 100 crore voters and con-ducting elections for such a vast electorate was itself a mas-sive task.

Kumar stated that a large number of officials and em-ployees work to ensure the electoral process runs smoothly.

He encouraged young people to actively engage in the de-mocratic process and referred to Article 326 of the Constitu-tion while urging students who have reached the age of 18 to register as voters.

The commission provides voter registration facilities through its digital platforms, he said.

Kumar also implored young people to not only become voters themselves but also to encourage their family mem-bers and peers to participate in elections.

"Young people are the most important force behind the de-mocratic future of the country. If they participate in the electoral process with awareness, democracy will become stronger," he said.

Amit Shah calls for AI-driven analysis of intelligence data to counter national-security challenges

NEW DELHI, AUG 24: Di-recting security agencies to strictly deal with infiltration, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday called for an artificial intelligen-ce-driven analysis of intelligence data to counter various national-se-curity challenges. Inaugurating the two-day ninth National Secu-rity Strategies (NSS) Conference-2026, Shah also laid emphasis on training for the implementation of the anti-terror policy developed by

his ministry called the "PRA-HAAR" scheme, according to a government statement.

The home minister also asked the agencies to expedite trial by bringing back fugitives, using trial-in-absentia provisions and under-taking a comprehensive and in-tegrated approach while investigating anti-terror cases un-der the Unlawful Activities (Pre-vention) Act (UAPA), the state-ment said.

"The Home Minister directed that an AI-based analysis of infor-mation available on MAC (Multi Agency Centre) platforms should be done to create SOPs to counter various national security chal-lenges. Union Home Minister di-rected all the agencies to take strict measures against infiltration," it added. The conference, being held in a hybrid mode, is being attended by 850 senior security and police officers from across the country,

besides Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan, Intelligence Bu-reau Director Mahesh Dixit, Cen-tral Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Director Praveen Sood and Secre-tary of the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) Parag Jain, among others. Several security officials and domain experts, deputy na-tional security advisors, heads of paramilitary forces and directors general of police (DGPs) of state police forces are also participating

in the conference, the statement said. "On the first day of the con-ference, discussions focussed on critical aspects of national security, including response to counter-ter-rorism challenges, fusion, analysis and operationalisation of intelli-gence through the Multi Agency Centre (MAC), vision document on narcotics control, detection and deportation of illegal migrants, a policy framework to combat cyber-crime and proxy warfare by Pak-

istan," it said. Before inaugurating the confer-ence, Shah laid a wreath at the Martyrs' Column in remembrance of the Intelligence Bureau person-nel who died in the line of duty while safeguarding national secu-rity and integrity. The deliberations on the second day will continue on threats from sub-aerial systems and counter-measures, securing the blue econ-omy, information warfare and its

implications for national security, and the need for a bio-security framework. Pursuant to the direc-tions of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the NSSC is being held in a hybrid format every year since 2021. The objective of the confer-ence is finding solutions to major national-security challenges, us-ing the extensive experience of offi-cers working at the grassroots level in collaboration with domain ex-perts.