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Tech supremacy to determine future combat horizon: Def Min

work in that direction. "How we wish to see India in 40-50 years, the imagination itself will give new energy to our enthusiasm," he said. Companies investing in new and emerging technologies would emerge as technology leaders in the future, Singh said.

"We need to not just imagine the technology of the future, but we need to develop the technology of the future, today. Because, in future warfare, only that country will be able to leverage a strategic advantage, who will lead the technology. And, our imagination of today will become tomorrow's military capabilities," he said.

The event was attended by several senior DRDO officials and representatives of defence industry firms, among others.

Singh said the partnership between DRDO and industry could make India a global hub for defence manufacturing and there was no other option.

Underlining that reforms in the defence sector in the past few decades had been "unprecedented", he said self-reliance did not merely mean developing machinery, parts or platforms, but "self-reliance should be a mindset".

The soul, mind, thought and consciousness should all be imbued with the idea of 'Atmanirbharta', Singh said, adding, "the country which has its technology, has the power to build its future".

Singh also praised start-ups and MSMEs, saying they had emerged as new flag-bearers in the defence sector.

To achieve the goal of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat', start-ups and MSMEs have important roles to play, he said.

A new wave of defence start-ups was emerging in India, and they are innovative, agile and disrupting traditional defence models, Singh said.

MSMEs will have to focus on quality, delivery, innovation and global standards and augment partnership with big industries, he added.

Speaker reviews preparations, calls for meticulous planning

ments at the assembly secretariat and MLA Hostel, with emphasis on coordination among all security and administrative agencies.

On the legislative business, the Speaker directed GADto ensure that all concerned departments furnish replies to the assembly questions within the prescribed timelines.

He instructed the departments to designate nodal officers for effective coordination with the assembly secretariat so that matters relating the session were dealt with promptly and efficiently.

Rather also reviewed arrangements relating to transportation and parking, directing the concerned authorities to make adequate arrangements to facilitate MLAs and minimise inconvenience to public.

He directed that government bills be submitted to the assembly secretariat well in advance to facilitate their timely processing and proper scheduling during the session.

The meeting was also informed about the implementation of the National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA) on a hybrid model.

The Speaker directed the Information Technology Department to ensure reliable Wi-Fi and internet connectivity and all necessary technical support throughout the session.

He stressed the need for effective traffic regulation and management around the assembly premises and other identified areas so that the movement of the general public is not adversely affected during the session.

Reviewing the essential civic and utility services, he directed the PHE and Power Development Department (PDD) to ensure uninterrupted water and power supply during the session.

The Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) was directed to ensure proper sanitation and cleanliness in and around the assembly premises and MLA hostel.

He also directed the Health and AYUSH Departments to make adequate arrangements, including establishment of requisite medical and AYUSH stalls/facilities at the assembly premises, for the convenience and well-being of members, staff and visitors.

Among others, the meeting was attended by LA secretary Manoj Kumar Pandit, IT commissioner Saurabh Bhagat, GAD secretary MRaju, law, justice &parliamentary affairs secretary Achal Sethi anddivisional commissioner (Kashmir) Anshul Garg, besides senior officers from security, traffic, information, hospitality &protocol, estates, health, AYUSH, SMC, fire &emergency services and other line departments.

Saxena inaugurates Zanskar Festival

since Zanskar attained district status in April this year.

The LG inspected stalls and Doksa exhibitions showcasing local culture, crafts and products, and virtually inaugurated various infrastructure assets completed in Zanskar district.

He also released 'Shesrab' - the annual magazine of the government degree college, Zanskar, and a special postal cover on "GonboRangjon" in collaboration with India Post.

Addressing the gathering, Saxena said district status was not merely an administrative change but a recognition of the long-standing aspirations and distinct identity of the people of Zanskar.

"Today, as we celebrate the first major cultural festival of Zanskar as a new district, it is a moment of pride for all of us," he said, congratulating the people of Zanskar on the occasion.

Highlighting Zanskar's tourism potential, the LG said its monasteries, mountains, rivers, trekking routes, adventure activities, traditions and warm-hearted people make it a destination with tremendous potential.

He noted that the Ladakh Zanskar Festival has been included in the UT Administration's official tourism calendar, helping bring Zanskar's culture and tourism onto the wider tourism map.

On connectivity, the LG highlighted the Nimmupadum-Darcha (NPD) Road and NH-301 Kargil-Zanskar Highway, saying these projects would strengthen connectivity and open new opportunities for tourism, local businesses, artisans, drivers, guides and young entrepreneurs.

"These projects are not merely about building roads. They are infrastructure that can transform people's lives, the local economy and opportunities," he said while acknowledging the priority accorded to Ladakh's development by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The LG urged Zanskaryouth to preserve their cultural heritage while using digital platforms, social media and modern technology to showcase the region to the world and create new opportunities in tourism and entrepreneurship.

Chairman/CEC, LAHDC Kargil, Mohammad Jaffer Akhoon; Ladakh MP Mohammad Haneefa Janand several other public representatives and officials from the district administration were present on the occasion.

VDG injured in accidental firing

shifted to a hospital, where his condition was stated to be stable.

The incident occurred amid intensified patrolling and area domination operations in Majaltawoods, following reports of suspicious movement in Brettal-Khubban and adjoining areas over the past few days, officials said.

India's strategic interests best served by 'considered calculation': EAM

"India, with greater interests, more exposure, a larger number of partners, and operating in a more complex landscape, will have to constantly apply and reapply itself to this dynamic. Often, the answers are in optimising strategy and responses," the External Affairs Minister said.

He said India's handling of the current turbulence could be assessed through several indicators, including energy security, exports, supply chains and the safety of Indian citizens abroad.

"If one were to evaluate our strategy in respect of the current turbulence, there are some obvious metrics to arrive at a judgement. Where energy security is concerned, diversification has kept supplies coming and costs down. New partners, new markets and new routings have protected and even expanded our exports. Our supply chains have similarly benefited by nimble solutions. The Indian community abroad has been secured in large measure due to the right policy choices," he said.

"Even our strategic interests are better served by considered calculation rather than knee-jerk responses. Each of these brings out the importance of continuous debate and dialogue," he added.

Jaishankar also stressed the importance of ensuring that India's intellectual engagement with international affairs keeps pace with its growing global role.

His remarks came against the backdrop of a volatile international environment, with conflicts in the Gulf and Ukraine, uncertainty over tariffs, dumping in global markets and the growing use of economic instruments as strategic tools.

He stressed that the complexity of India's external environment makes continuous debate and dialogue essential to shaping an effective response to global uncertainties.

Meta to report child safety cases to cyber crime portal

sible. "To collectively strengthen our efforts to combat this harm, Meta will now report child safety matters directly to the cybercrime portal managed by I4C," the spokesperson said.

Meta, which owns Instagram and Facebook, is the first major technology intermediary to commit to setting up a direct reporting channel with Indian law enforcement for such cases. Until now, the company has primarily reported child safety cases to the US-based National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC).

Government sources said the online safety of children is a "fundamental principle" for every social media platform operating in India and is "non-negotiable".

They said action would be taken against platforms that fail to take proactive steps to protect children online.

Meta, which owns Instagram and Facebook, is the first major technology intermediary to commit to setting up a direct reporting channel with Indian law enforcement for such cases.

In July, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) issued a notice to Meta over alleged Child Sexual Exploitative and Abuse Material (CSEAM) in paid advertisements on Instagram.

The action followed a BBC Eye investigation that alleged Instagram had carried paid advertisements promoting CSAM, with some advertisements directing users to Telegram channels hosting sexually explicit material involving children. The investigation also alleged that Meta's recommendation systems amplified videos containing such material.

Earlier this month, the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) summoned Meta India executives over the issue.

The I4C, under the Ministry of Home Affairs, operates the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal, with a special focus on crimes against women and children. It has also developed the Sahyog portal to route content takedown requests to social media platforms.

The government is continuing discussions with other online platforms to ensure they proactively detect and remove harmful content and report suspected cases to Indian law enforcement agencies.

Iran rejects any talks with US

he was open to holding talks with Iran, after weeks of saying it was too early to make a deal to end the war.

"The failing Nation of Iran wants to make a deal, quickly and badly. I will determine whether or not the U.S.A. will choose to engage -- The concept of which we are open to," Trump said on his Truth Social network.

Iran has repeatedly listed demands including war reparations and the lifting of sanctions as preconditions for ending the war and its blockade on the Strait of Hormuz.

BRICS Summit reflects India's growing diplomatic strength: Kavinder

nation. Describing Bharatiya Yuva Sansad as a "nursery for responsible citizenship and future leadership", he said India's democratic ethos has deep civilisational roots. The traditions of dialogue, deliberation and collective decision-making, reflected in institutions such as the 'Sabha' and 'Samiti' during the Vedic period, underline the long-standing importance accorded to participative governance in Indian civilisation.

The governor emphasised that democracy is much more than elections and institutions. "It is a continuous process of dialogue, participation, accountability, agreement and disagreement, built on public trust," he said, urging young people to understand constitutional values and incorporate them into their conduct and public life.

Referring to former Prime Minister and statesman Atal Bihari Vajpayee, he said his vision of parliamentary democracy remains particularly relevant for the younger generation.

Gupta stressed that differences of opinion are natural in a democracy, but these should not become differences of heart, and that national interest must always remain above partisan considerations.

Speaking on women's empowerment, he said Prime Minister Narendra Modi had consistently highlighted Nari Shakti as a vital pillar of India's progress and the vision of Viksit Bharat.

He described Nari Shakti Vandan Adhinyam as an important step towards strengthening women's political representation and creating wider opportunities for women-led social and economic transformation.

Gupta said the vision of Viksit Bharat@2047 cannot be achieved through government efforts alone. It requires the collective contribution of the youth, women, farmers, scientists, entrepreneurs and every citizen.

Highlighting India's growing global stature, he referred to the recent BRICS Summit in New Delhi and said India's ability to bring countries with diverse interests together and build consensus reflects its growing diplomatic capability and strategic autonomy. He emphasised that India believes in dialogue over conflict, diplomacy over confrontation and cooperation in the larger interest of humanity.

"India is no longer a nation that merely listens to the world; it is a nation capable of bringing the world together," he said, adding that the growing support for India's greater role in the United Nations and the UN Security Council reflects the country's expanding global influence.

Calling upon the young participants to become responsible and sensitive leaders, Shri Gupta said true leadership means taking society forward together, giving voice to the weaker and marginalised sections, respecting democratic traditions and placing national interest above all else.

The governor congratulated the organisers, office-bearers, mentors and youth delegates from across the country for making the national session meaningful and successful.

Bring UCC Bill in Par if you have numbers: Omar to BJP

should not be decided by individual states; it has to be decided by the country as a whole. The country as a whole is represented not in the states, but in Parliament," he said.

The chief minister said the BJP had not brought some of the key legislations it had been "going to town" about in Parliament.

"Up until now, whatever legislation they spoke about --

whether it was 'One Nation, One Election' or reservation -- they did not bring those to Parliament. Now, for this one as well, they are talking about bringing it through the states," he said.

On the de-escalation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), Abdullah said it was a welcome step.

"Anything that reduces tension on the Line of Control or the Line of Actual Control is a good step. Particularly for those people who live close to it, and we know how difficult it is for people living near the LoC or LAC. Similarly, we hope, over time, that along the Line of Control also, things will get better," he said.

On China hailing India's foreign policy, Abdullah said New Delhi's foreign policy had always been independent and there was no need to seek validation from other countries.

"Our foreign policy is our own. Why do we look for other countries' certificates? The danger with something like this is that tomorrow when China says something against our foreign policy, then what will you do? Therefore, I think we should not give too much importance to what other countries say about our foreign policy, whether positive or negative, because we can't cherry-pick," he said.

"Tomorrow, if there is opposition, we will say, 'Don't interfere in our policy'," he said.

The chief minister said the BRICS summit's condemnation of the Pahalgam terror attack was a success of India's foreign policy.

"The fact that Pahalgam itself was condemned (at BRICS summit) is a big thing. Please see how many allies of Pakistan were in that room. Therefore, for even Pahalgam to be mentioned by name, that in itself is a success of our foreign policy," he added.

Gen Z, Gen Alpha must put nation first: FM

done for them.

Addressing the 36th convocation ceremony of Dr M G R Educational & Research Institute here, the finance minister said the country was ready to listen to the aspirations of the youth, but implored them to step forward with a deep sense of responsibility and civic duty.

"Whether you call yourselves Gen Z or Gen Alpha, we are all ready to listen to what you have to say. But you must reflect on what is happening around you, what your role is, and what can be achieved for the country through you," Sitharaman said, invoking the famous ethos of asking what one can do for one's country.

She exhorted the passing-out students to assume leadership in their respective spheres and never compromise on national interest.

"Take up leadership. You must lead, and you must put the country first. Only if the country remains secure and strong will we have a home to live in. We should never give up our country," she said, pointing to ongoing global conflicts where citizens have been displaced from their homelands.

Highlighting India's economic resilience, Sitharaman noted that despite unprecedented global uncertainties, including the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war and conflicts in the Middle East affecting supplies of crude oil, gas, and fertilizers, India has maintained macroeconomic stability and clocked a 7.8 per cent growth rate. She attributed this stability to strong political leadership under Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Emphasising the expanding avenues for young professionals, the minister highlighted Tamil Nadu's emergence as an industrial and technological powerhouse. She pointed out that the Sriperumbudur-Oragadam corridor has become a premier global automotive manufacturing and smartphone export hub.

Over 3,200 candidates across medical, dental, engineering, allied health sciences, law, and management streams received their degrees during the ceremony, which was also attended by the university's Founder-Chancellor A C Shanmugam and Tamil Nadu BJP President Nainar Nagenthran.

MEA hails over 50 successful outcomes during India's BRICS Chairship

terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Overall, at the summit, we had participation of 32 delegations, which included 11 member states, 10 partner countries, 4 regional organisations, and 7 international organisations. That itself shows the kind of robust participation we had, and several delegations were led at the level of Head of State and Head of Government," Jaiswal said.

Reflecting on New Delhi's role as the host, the spokesperson added that the Summit yielded a "successful outcome" as India managed to bring different countries together and help pave the way forward for further opportunities.

"So, we are very satisfied. It was a successful outcome. We were able to bring countries with differing positions together-that is our convening strength, the convening strength of India today and how India is seen in the world at large. Beyond that, there are development-focused, practical, action-oriented outcomes, and we will all come together to take them forward to create more opportunities for our youth, our people, and our women," he said.

Addressing questions regarding the execution of the initiativeRegarding the involvement of non-member partner countries in these newly announced frameworks, the MEA clarified that the current declaration remains centred on full BRICS members, as the bloc prioritises internal consolidation following its recent expansion.

"On the question of partner countries, whether partner countries are also involved: At this point, this declaration has been adopted by the countries who are members of BRICS," the spokesperson said.

The declaration called for the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, and greater efforts through dialogue and diplomacy towards lasting peace, security and stability in the region.

It also stressed the need to maintain the smooth flow of global trade, supply chains and energy in accordance with international law.

Govt sets 0.4 pc fee on UPI payments above Rs 2,000

tomers making UPI payments."

Also, individuals will continue to have "unlimited free usage, with no monthly quotas, volume restrictions or tiered caps on free UPI transactions", it said.

The carefully calibrated move signalled the end of an era for the world's largest real-time payments system even as the government tried to avoid alarming the hundreds of millions of daily users.

From October 15, a 0.4 per cent Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) will be levied on person-to-merchant (P2M) transactions above Rs 2,000 through UPI (Unified Payments Interface), capped at Rs 300 for payments of Rs 75,000 and above.

Essential and thin-margin sectors -- railways, telecom, insurance, fuel and agricultural inputs -- will pay a flat MDR of Rs 5 per transaction above Rs 2,000, intended to keep costs predictable for critical services; these categories account for nearly 17 per cent of P2M transaction volume but roughly 46 per cent of P2M transaction value.

The same flat-fee treatment extends to government utility bill collection (electricity, water, piped gas) and educational fee payments such as school tuition and university fees above Rs 2,000, both similarly exempted below that threshold.

Payments into mutual funds, securities and through

stockbrokers and dealers will attract a lighter 0.02 per cent MDR, capped at Rs 300 -- a rate designed to keep the cost of investing low and encourage retail participation in formal financial markets.

Person-to-person (P2P) transfers -- which make up 37 per cent of UPI's transaction volume and 70 per cent of its transaction value -- will continue to attract zero charges, irrespective of size. Small-value transactions up to Rs 2,000, which the government said account for more than 95 per cent of total P2M volume, remain untouched.

The charges so collected will be distributed among the firms facilitating the transactions and are being introduced to bolster investment into infrastructure resilience, innovation, cybersecurity and customer service, the National Payments Corporation of India said.

"Charges will apply only to person-to-merchant (P2M) transactions exceeding Rs 2,000," the finance ministry said in a statement. "A nominal merchant discount rate of 0.4 per cent will be levied on P2M transactions above Rs 2,000. This commission will be shared amongst the payment ecosystem partners including banks and app providers."

The government has also moved to prevent the new charges from being quietly passed on to consumers: UPI app providers are barred from levying platform fees or hidden charges, and banks have been directed to ensure merchants do not pass MDR costs on to customers.

There will be no monthly quotas or volume limits for free UPI transactions for individuals.

The framework layers different rates across categories of transactions rather than applying a blanket charge. On a Rs 3,000 purchase, the 0.4 per cent rate works out to a Rs 12 fee paid by the merchant to its acquiring bank; on a Rs 50,000 purchase, it comes to Rs 200. On a Rs 1,00,000 purchase, the percentage calculation would otherwise total Rs 400, but the fixed Rs 300 ceiling applies instead -- a structure designed to keep high-value transaction costs predictable.

"UPI app providers are explicitly prohibited from levying platform fees or hidden charges," the statement said. "Banks have been advised to ensure that merchants do not pass MDR charges to customers for UPI payments."

There will be no monthly quotas, volume limits, or tiered caps on free UPI transactions for individuals.

"Daily transaction limits enforced by banks and NPCI (Rs 1 lakh-5 lakh depending on category) are purely risk-management measures, not commercial charge tiers," it said.

Industry pressure to reintroduce charges has been building for years. The Payments Council of India -- whose members include Airtel Payments Bank, Amazon Pay, Google Pay, Cashfree and Jio Payments Bank -- wrote to the Prime Minister's Office seeking reconsideration of zero MDR, while banks separately pushed for fees on merchants with annual turnover above Rs 40 lakh. The Reserve Bank of India and NPCI have also previously urged the government to revisit the policy.

RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra, addressing the issue after a recent monetary policy announcement, said plainly that "someone has to pay the cost", while noting that the final call on MDR rests with the government rather than the central bank.

Ex-ACR booked in Gair Mumkin Khad land case

on the outcome of a preliminary enquiry, which prima facie disclosed that the accused, from May 23, 2018 to July 11, 2018, during his posting as assistant commissioner (revenue), Jammu, allegedly abused his official position by granting nine permissions for alienation/transfer of Gair Mumkin Khad land situated at Chowadi and Deeli, officials said.

The permissions were allegedly granted in violation of the applicable revenue laws, government orders and the high court directions concerning land recorded as "Gair Mumkin Khad".

The enquiry revealed that the permissions were shown to have been granted with the approval of the deputy commissioner, Jammu. However, verification conducted at the office of DC, Jammu, revealed that no such approval, note sheet or formal delegation order was available on record.

Accordingly, the FIR was registered under section 5(1)(d) read with section 5(2) of the J&K Prevention of Corruption Act, Svt 2006, and sections 120-B, 467, 468 and 471 of RPC.

Further investigation in the case was in progress, the officials added.

India global voice for peace: VP

diplomacy had changed dramatically in the last decade. It is now marked by greater engagement and a renewed sense of confidence.

Quoting External Affairs minister S Jaishankar, he said countries can't say "your problem is your problem and my problem is our problem".

"The world should consider every problem as ours, then only solutions can be found," he said.

Addressing an event here to mark 25 years of the Indian Council for World Affairs getting the status of 'institution of national importance' through an Act of Parliament, Radhakrishnan said that in a world burdened with conflicts and contradictions, the success of the BRICS Summit is "all the more remarkable".

Hailing the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he noted that the unanimous BRICS leaders' declaration is a big achievement for India.

The vice president is the president of the ICWA.

US confirms deployment of space-based weapons for first time

that."

It underscores how the world's major space powers are preparing for the prospect of conflict extending into space. Satellites have become indispensable to modern warfare, as conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East have demonstrated.

He argued that the US must adopt a more active warfighting posture, including calling for orbital interceptors and other weapons.

Some other countries are also looking to develop orbital weapons. That includes Germany, which has a 35-billion euro military space spending plan aimed at countering growing threats from adversaries.

Major General Michael Traut, the head of German Space Command, has previously said that as part of that the country will channel funding into intelligence-gathering satellites, sensors and systems designed to disrupt adversary spacecraft. Traut emphasized that Germany would not field destructive weapons in orbit that could generate debris, but said a range of non-kinetic options existed to disrupt hostile satellites, including jamming, lasers and actions against ground control stations.

India, US kick off military exercise focused on high-altitude warfare

or M-LIDS, are planned at the Mahajan Field Firing Range.

The training is designed to gradually increase in complexity. It will begin with expert academic discussions, subject-matter exchanges and command-post exercises before moving into tactical training and live-fire activities. This approach is intended to help the two armies establish common procedures before testing them in more demanding scenarios.

Colonel Ben Jackman, commander of the 1st Mobile Brigade Combat Team, 11th Airborne Division, said the exercise would help both forces build greater trust.

"Yudh Abhyas 2026 provides our soldiers an opportunity to enhance bilateral readiness, cooperation and interoperability between US and Indian Army forces," Jackman said. "By training alongside the Indian Army, we are strengthening our mutual trust and building combat credibility."