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MHA declares 'Shahzad Bhatti Network' terrorist outfit under UAPA

radicalising gullible youth by offering various allurements, motivating them for anti-national activities, and mobilising resources for antinational acts in collusion with other banned organisations and designated entities."

It adds: "SBNis promoting terrorism through violent activities that disrupt public order and by using various digital communication platforms to disseminate provocative messages, posing a serious challenge to the integrity of the nation."

"The network is involved in terrorism and has participated in various acts of terrorism in India," it says.

The cases registered against the SBN across India include those under the Explosives Act, the Information Technology Act, Arms Act, UAPA, Official Secrets Act, Immigration and Foreigners Act. The network also faces multiple cases under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

"The decision was taken after consultations with all state and central agencies, keeping in mind the growing footprint of the Shahzad Bhatti network. He has been involved in multiple terror cases across the country. Moreover, he managed to radicalise and recruit thousands of youngsters from across the country who have been involved in multiple cases in Delhi, Haryana, Punjab and other states," a source said.

Bhatti allegedly lured youngsters with small sums of money to install solar-powered CCTV cameras near security establishments, enabling surveillance of high-impact installations and individuals, and to "plant Molotov cocktails". The network has also allegedly been paying locals to conduct reconnaissance of police, defence and religious sites and install CCTV cameras for espionage.

He also lures recruits with money to conduct reconnaissance and carry out targeted strikes, according to sources.

Despite being based in Dubai, Bhatti is suspected of maintaining an international network, including contacts in the US, Canada and Europe, sources said.

He is suspected of using a Moroccan passport for international travel.

Bhatti's activities represent a convergence of organised crime, social media-based recruitment and cross-border terror networks. The allegations against him have not been legally proven and the cases remain under investigation.

India rejects 'so-called' Pak-China boundary commission

soever on India's sovereignty over these territories", he pointed out.

"Instead of engaging in such theatrics, we call on Pakistan to immediately vacate from areas under its illegal and forcible occupation," Jaiswal said.

His comments followed social media posts by Pakistan's foreign ministry that described the meeting of the Pakistan-China Boundary Joint Commission as a "significant milestone" for bilateral relations. It said the two sides had operationalised the joint commission for "enhanced cooperation in border management, joint border surveys, trade flows and people to people connectivity".

The inaugural meeting of the commission, held at the foreign ministry in Islamabad, was co-led by Li Ya, deputy director general of the department of boundary and ocean affairs in China's foreign ministry, and Bilal Mahmood Chaudhary, director general (China) in Pakistan's foreign ministry.

HC sends Kathua judge on deputation to Ladakh

the meantime, the additional district & sessions judge, Kathua, will hold the additional charge of the post until further orders.

Teacher suspended over girl student's 'harassment'

14, officials said.

The probe was ordered by the authorities concerned, following complaints by a girl student alleging harassment by the teacher at the school.

According to an order issued by the chief education officer, Ramban, the teacher was suspended under rule 31 of the Jammu and Kashmir Civil Services (Classification, Control & Appeal) Rules, 1956.

During the suspension period, Ahmed will remain attached to the government primary school, Bhatta, in Zone Khari, the order said.

Further administrative action would be taken based on the findings of the inquiry, officials said.

Pak extends airspace ban for Indian aircraft

The extension came into effect at 10:45 am on Wednesday and will remain until 04:59 am on Oct 24, 2026, it stated.

The measure came as the previous extension of the ban was set to expire on September 24.

Pakistan's airspace is divided into two flight information regions (FIRs) - Karachi and Lahore, according to a Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) document from 2022. The latest NOTAM applies to both the Karachi and Lahore FIRs.

Army chief begins Russia visit to boost military ties

Mikhailovskaya Military Artillery Academy and interact with its leadership and faculty.

Russia was the top supplier of military hardware to India during 2021-25, according to a Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (Sipri) report published in March. The largest share of Indian arms imports during 2021-25 came from Russia, at 40 pc, it said.

The visit comes at a time India and the US are conducting joint Exercise Yudh Abhyas at Auli in Uttarakhand and the Mahajan field firing range near Bikaner. The exercise is aimed at enhancing the joint military capability of both armies for employment of integrated battle groups (IBG) in mountainous and semi-mountainous terrain, with emphasis on infantry-dominated operations.

India summons Pak envoy over naval collision, lodges protest

the MEA said.

"The Charge d'Affaires of Pakistan was advised to convey to the concerned Pakistani authorities, the need for all military units to observe due care and respect the provisions of the relevant agreements between the two sides in order to prevent any repeat of such incidents," the MEA added.

The episode comes against the backdrop of longstanding military tensions between India and Pakistan, making the in-

vocation of a bilateral confidence-building agreement particularly significant.

Saxena inaugurates LRLM-SARAS Mela

Main Market, aims to go beyond exhibition and sales by creating opportunities for rural women entrepreneurs to interact with customers, buyers, and SHGs from across the country; understand market requirements; and learn about packaging, branding, technology, and modern business practices.

"SARAS Mela is not merely an exhibition or a platform for buying and selling products, but a celebration of the hard work, creativity, talent and entrepreneurial spirit of Ladakh's women," the LG said.

He called for enabling SHG women to move from livelihood activities to sustainable, market-oriented enterprises and take products made in Ladakh to markets across the country and eventually the world.

He highlighted the progress under the Ladakh Rural Livelihoods Mission (LRLM), with more than 16,000 women, 2,310 SHGs, 248 Village Organisations and 18 Cluster Level Federations now associated with the Mission. He said the growing participation of women in agriculture, livestock, food processing, handicrafts and other enterprises is strengthening not only family incomes but also the rural economy.

He emphasised the need to connect Ladakh's rich traditional skills, including weaving, wool work, handicrafts and local food, with modern markets so that the region's heritage becomes a sustainable source of income for rural women.

Calling upon SHG women to move beyond production and embrace entrepreneurship, the Lieutenant Governor stressed the importance of better packaging, branding, technology and business practices.

He said the goal should be to develop women as entrepreneurs and producers capable of scaling up their enterprises and creating a distinct identity for Ladakh's products.

The LG also highlighted the Lakhpati Didi initiative, noting that Ladakh currently has 385 LakhpatiDidis, while more than 3,000 women have the potential to join their ranks. He called for strengthening existing livelihoods, creating new opportunities and supporting women in scaling up their enterprises.

Through LRLM, approximately 15 crore has been made available through the Revolving Fund and the Community Investment Fund. He urged women to utilise these resources productively to strengthen livelihoods and create new business opportunities.

He said SHG women should not be viewed merely as beneficiaries but as livelihood holders, entrepreneurs and active partners in the economic development of their families and communities.

"When our women move forward, Ladakh will move forward," he said, congratulating the participants, officials and wishing the LRLM-SARAS Mela 2026 success.

Saxena inspected the stalls showing different products from all parts of Ladakh and also interacted with artisans, entrepreneurs and women SHGs. He also flagged off a fleet of vehicles sponsored under Ajeevika Grameen Express Yojana (AGEY) on the occasion.

Actor Anant Nag to get Dadasaheb Phalke Award

more than 250 films in five decades, the 78-year-old is also a renowned name in the theatre world. He will be given the award, the highest recognition in Indian cinema, at the National Film Awards ceremony in Kevadia, Gujarat, on September 22.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated the veteran actor and said, "For several decades, his effortless performances, remarkable versatility and brilliance have left a very strong mark on Indian cinema, particularly Kannada cinema. In whichever role he has played, he brought rare depth and authenticity."

"This is indeed a richly deserved honour for a truly distinguished artist," he said in a post on X.

"On the recommendation of the Dadasaheb Phalke Award Selection Committee, the Government of India is pleased to announce that the actor will be conferred the prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke Award 2024 for his contribution to Indian cinema and an illustrious cinematic journey that has inspired generations," PIB said in a release.

UPI MDR may attract 18 pc GST

The share of P2M UPI transactions above Rs 2,000 has steadily increased from 15.1 per cent in FY23 to 20.1 per cent in the June quarter of FY27, reflecting a sustained shift towards higher-value merchant payments on UPI.

Under the proposed framework, the MDR would be borne by the merchants as a charge for payment settlement services. Since the charge is to be borne by merchants for processing and settling digital payment transactions through the payment network, the 18 per cent GST on the service will be applicable on the merchants.

AMRG Global Managing Partner Rajat Mohan said the introduction of MDR on UPI transactions exceeding Rs 2,000 brings significant GST implications for India's digital payment ecosystem.

Under the statutory framework, these payment settlement services will now attract an 18 per cent GST on the MDR billed to merchants. The proposed MDR charges could generate an estimated Rs 3,500-Rs 4,000 crore in annual GST collections, thus unlocking substantial revenue for the exchequer.

"However, the regulatory structure provides crucial relief: registered merchants absorbing these fees can claim Input Tax Credit (ITC) on the GST paid, heavily softening their overall tax burden," Mohan said.

Nangia Global, Executive Director - Indirect Tax, Sivakumar Ramjee, said under this framework, GST will not touch the core transaction value; instead, 18 per cent GST will apply strictly to the 0.4 per cent merchant fee.

"For large, GST-registered enterprises, this tax creates minimal friction as it qualifies fully for Input Tax Credit, effectively neutralising the tax hit. Concurrently, strict exemptions for small vendors and transactions under Rs 2,000 completely insulate the grass-roots retail economy," Ramjee said.

He said merchants with output tax liability in Goods and Services Tax (GST) system will be able to claim ITC. But, those who are dealing with exempt goods and services under GST, for such merchants the GST burden on MDR charges will have to be borne by them.

According to Ramjee, at the current transaction volumes, where high-value P2M payments comprise a significant share of UPI's financial value, this tax-on-MDR model is projected to generate over Rs 5,000 crore annually in fresh GST revenue for the exchequer.

This structural update strikes a calculated balance: it builds a lucrative revenue stream for the government and funds payment infrastructure, all while preserving the zero-fee experience that drives India's retail digital adoption, Ramjee added.

EY India, Tax Partner, Saurabh Agarwal said the 18 per cent GST will be leviable on MDR charges which will be recovered by the banks from the merchant.

"However, where the bank provides the statement indicating such charges separately or a GST invoice, the same would be available as an input tax credit to the merchant which can be used to set off the output GST liability of the merchant," Agarwal said.

AKM Global, Lead-Indirect Tax, Ikesh Nagpal, said the newly announced MDR would attract 18 per cent GST on the service charge, rather than on the underlying UPI payment amount, and would be available as ITC.

"Using the reported monthly value of Rs 6 lakh crore in merchant payments above Rs 2,000, a uniform 0.4 per cent MDR would imply gross GST of approximately Rs 432 crore a month, or Rs 5,184 crore annually. This is an indicative calculation before accounting for merchant exemptions, concessional charges and transaction caps. The government's net additional revenue would be lower, as eligible businesses could claim input tax credit on GST paid on MDR," Nagpal said.

EAM discusses 'development partnership' with Bhutanese counterpart

ing, the EAM wrote in a post on X, "Delighted to meet FMBhutan Lyonpo DNDhungyel and jointly review our wide - ranging cooperation. Thank him for hosting me in the spiritual and historical centre of Bumthang."

"Our conversation focused on advancing our multifaceted engagement in development partnership, energy, trade, connectivity, culture and people-to-people ties. Today's discussions reflected the trust, goodwill and warmth of our ties," he added.

Following the meeting, Jaishankar joined the Bhutanese Foreign Minister to mark a series of landmark infrastructure, energy, and healthcare developments across Bhutan, emphasising the enduring strength of the India-Bhutan partnership.

Sharing the developments on X, Jaishankar highlighted his engagement with Dhungyel in "Laying the foundation stone for the 500 KW Lunana Hydropower Project in Gasa, northern Bhutan."

He described the project as "A proud milestone for our longstanding energy collaboration starting from Bhutan's first hydroelectric plant 'Jungshina' in Thimphu in 1967, to now connecting Bhutan's last unelectrified settlements."

The visits also focused on expanding medical infrastructure and regional connectivity in eastern Bhutan. Jaishankar noted the key inaugurations, including "Inaugurating the 65-bedded Gyaltsuen Jetsun Pema Mother & Child Hospital in Mongar," adding that "The state-of-the-art facility will strengthen access to quality, specialised maternal and child care in eastern Bhutan."

In addition to health and energy sector achievements, the delegation dedicated new transit infrastructure aimed at boosting trade and travel.

Jaishankar cited "Inaugurating the 80-metre long Jaganathan Bridge in Samdrup Jongkhar," noting that "Built by Project Dantak, the Bhutan-India friendship project will improve connectivity between Trashigang and Samdrup Jongkhar in eastern Bhutan."

The EAM arrived in Paro, Bhutan, earlier in the day as part of his official visit to the country from September 16-17, saying he looks forward to engagements aimed at advancing India's "unique ties of friendship" with Bhutan.

Bhutan's Foreign Minister Lyonpo DN Dhungyel was present at the site to welcome the EAM. Jaishankar added that he looks forward to his engagements "to advance our unique ties of friendship."

As per the MEA official press release, during the visit, Jaishankar will hold bilateral talks with the Bhutanese Foreign Minister. He will also receive a royal audience with the King of Bhutan, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck and call on the Prime Minister of Bhutan, Tshering Tobgay.

"The visit is in keeping with the tradition of regular high-level exchanges between India and Bhutan, and to further strengthen the existing close ties of friendship and cooperation between the two countries," the ministry said.

The visit comes as India gives vital importance to its 'Neighbourhood First' policy.

LG attends Shiv Mahapuran Katha at Raebareli

minister Manoj Kumar Pandeyfor organising this extraordinary spiritual gathering, which had infused new vitality among people.

He remarked that just as gold is refined by fire, holy company rekindles and purifies the spiritual energy within our souls.

Highlighting the eternal vision of universal welfare, the LG said Sanatana Dharma has always emphasised unity and harmony, noting that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India is manifesting this philosophy globally.

Referring to the recent BRICS Summit in Delhi, he said the ancient mantra 'VasudhaivaKutumbakam' (the world is one family) is now being embraced by nations worldwide as a foundation for peace and collective welfare.

"What our ancestors envisioned millennia ago is now being embraced by nations worldwide, as they step forward to adopt this philosophy for peace and harmony," he said.

The LG urged society to remain vigilant against divisive elements and emphasised that unity is India's greatest strength.

He reminded the gathering that Sanatana culture nurtures diversity, harmony, and human welfare. He called upon saints and enlightened members of society to guide the nation in realising comprehensive development.

He affirmed his confidence that the spirit of unity will once again make India a developed nation, restoring its ancient glory.

"Time has come when we shall guide the world and saints and enlightened members of society will play a vital role and bear great responsibility in this mission. The power of unity and its spirit will once again make India a developed nation, and I am fully confident that we shall regain our ancient glory," the LG said.

Iran seeks no more US conflict in talks with China

turn to the MoU at an early date, rebuild the negotiation mechanism based on the consensus reached so far, and conduct substantive consultations on issues of respective concern, Wang said.

Araghchi briefed Wang on the latest developments in West Asia and the Gulf, saying Iran is not interested in continuing the conflict and was prepared to return to diplomatic channels while defending what it considers its legitimate rights.

He said Tehran considered the US-Iran Memorandum of Understanding to remain in force and that Iran had reached an agreement with Oman on arrangements for reopening the Strait of Hormuz.

He also called on Washington to honour its commitments.

The Iranian foreign minister said Tehran was ready to deepen cooperation with Beijing within that framework.

China, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council and a comprehensive strategic partner of Iran, was ready to play a constructive role in resolving international disputes and safeguarding what Beijing described as Iran's legitimate rights and interests, Wang said.

He also called on Iran to pursue dialogue with Gulf states while respecting territorial sovereignty and national security.

Araghchi said Iran was ready to hold consultations with regional countries to establish good-neighbourly relations and work toward restoring peace and stability in the region.

A key focus of the talks was the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial international shipping route.

Wang called on all parties to take effective measures to reopen the strait at an early date, ensure safe and unimpeded navigation and maintain the stability of global energy transportation and supply chains, the readout said.

He also expressed concern that the conflict could spread further to Yemen and the Red Sea, calling on all parties to avoid actions that could complicate the situation and instead resolve disputes through dialogue and negotiations.

Wang said recent developments had highlighted weaknesses in the existing Middle East security architecture and called for its reform and strengthening.

He also reaffirmed that Beijing's policy toward Iran remained "consistent and stable", saying China would oppose the use of force and uphold international norms at the UN Security Council and other multilateral forums.

The two sides also exchanged views on other international and regional issues of common concern, it said.

US' Russia sanctions bill shows govt's 'failed' policies: Kharage

government agreed to a trade framework that expands American access to India's agricultural products, mortgaging the interests of our farmers! The framework virtually forces us to buy USD 500 billion worth of American goods over five years," the Congress chief said.

"Yesterday's surrender on the MDR on UPI is another stark example of your government's meekness!" Kharage said.

"From tariffs and trade to H1B1 immigration, visas and digital payments, the pressure from Washington keeps mounting, and you, 'Howdy Modi ji' keeps surrendering!" he added.

Earlier, Congress' media and publicity department head Pawan Khera also took a swipe at the Modi government over the US bill. "We are not playing ball with America and China. We are the ball," he said on X.

The Lindsey O Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026 cleared a procedural hurdle in the House of Representatives on Tuesday evening after two Democratic lawmakers broke ranks with the party and voted in favour of the bill with the Republicans.

The resolution to advance the Russia sanctions bill and a slew of other legislations was approved by a 214-211 vote. The bill is expected to come up for a final vote in the House later on Wednesday.

Democratic Congressman Gregory Meeks, the ranking member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, on Monday opposed the Russia sanctions bill, contending that it would grant President Trump unchecked authority to impose tariffs without any guardrails.

Last month, the US Senate passed the bill with an overwhelming 86-11 majority. The bill seeks to impose sanctions not only on Russia's leadership and energy sector, but also on the "shadow fleet" of vessels that enable Moscow to evade sanctions on oil deliveries.

The vote on the bill is taking place at a time when pro-Ukraine groups have stepped up efforts to lobby support for their cause.

The Ukraine Action Summit, organised by the American Coalition for Ukraine, is underway here to lobby US lawmakers for continued support of Kyiv.

The US believes that Russia's crude oil trade is funding the war against Ukraine. The Bill also seeks to authorise President Donald Trump to impose 100 per cent tariffs on Russia's top oil trading partners, including China and India.

The bill passed by the US Senate on August 7 does not name Russia's trading partners, but mentions five largest importers of oil and gas by volume.

The bill has to be passed by the House of Representatives before it is sent to the President for signature. The House breaks into early recess on Thursday and is expected to reconvene on November 9 after the mid-term elections.

Tax policy research should enter public discourse: FM

She was speaking at the Eighth International Tax Conference on 'New Age Taxation' here organised by the International Tax Research and Analysis Foundation.

"A mature tax policy debate must go beyond sectoral considerations," she said, urging tax professionals to "rise above sectoral consideration and put nation first."

Sitharaman said the government had deliberately rationalised provisions relating to Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) and Tax Collected at Source (TCS), raised thresholds and reduced unnecessary criminal consequences.

The finance minister stressed the need for tax policy discussions to take a broader view of India's economic and developmental priorities, rather than being driven solely by individual sectors or professional interests.

On international taxation, the finance minister said India renegotiated its tax treaties with Mauritius, Singapore and Cyprus to restore its right to tax capital gains at source.

Sitharaman said India faced its own set of challenges on the path to growth and development, but was better placed despite the difficult global environment.

She cited tariff threats, three ongoing wars, complications around the Strait of Hormuz and the impact of crude oil and fertiliser prices as challenges and said crude and fertilisers account for some of the country's biggest imports.