

Jaishankar lashes out at Sharif in UN speech

Suhasini Haidar

NEW DELHI

Delivering India's National Statement at the UN General Assembly, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Saturday said the country will exercise its right to defend itself against terrorism while focusing on the impact of conflicts on the Global South.

In a response to Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's speech a day before, where he had criticised India for launching Operation Sindoor last year, Mr. Jaishankar said that there could be "no dilution" of the world's zero-tolerance approach to terrorism. "Yesterday, a serial practitioner of terrorism misrepresented facts before this Assembly. Arguments were invoked to normalise terrorism and claim immunity from its consequences," Mr. Jaishankar said, attacking Mr. Sharif's speech, in which he had called Kashmir the "jugu-



S. Jaishankar

lar vein" of Pakistan and accused India of human rights violations in the region. Mr. Sharif had also claimed that the BJP government in India unleashed a "reign of terror" against minorities in the country.

"Our right to defend ourselves against terrorism will be exercised," Mr. Jaishankar said, adding that governments indulging in state-sponsored terrorism with a "cross-border purpose" must be held to account.

CONTINUED ON

» PAGE 7

Jaishankar lashes out at Sharif in UN speech

The External Affairs Minister also responded to the Pakistan Prime Minister's statement that India is "weaponising water" by holding the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance. "Friendship and goodwill cannot co-exist with terrorism. Understandings premised on that will naturally be called into question," he said in his speech.

Earlier in the day, Indian and Pakistani diplomats also exchanged sharp words as India exercised its right to reply to the Pakistan PM's speech.

On global conflicts

Briefing the UNGA regarding India's position on global conflicts, including the wars in Ukraine and West Asia, Mr. Jaishankar said that countries far from the conflicts were being "penalised for no fault of theirs", referring to the impact on the "Four Fs" of Food, Fuel, Fertilizers and Finance.

"Those most impacted often have the least say. This Assembly must face up to the true state of affairs," he added, also referring to the attacks on seafarers in both conflicts, in which 18 Indians have been amongst those killed.

"India has joined Liberia and 23 other partners in an initiative to rally global public opinion against such unwarranted targeting," he said.

Speaking about Israel's war in Gaza, Mr. Jaishankar said that India believes peace requires a two-state solution and that New Delhi is continuing with its humanitarian efforts and providing relief supplies to Palestinians.

Mr. Jaishankar, who spoke on the fifth day of the General Assembly, said that a multi-polar world was on its way, and that the post-1945 order would have to give way to "new realities". He called for "an intrinsically diverse world with a more democratic future".

He also made a pitch for reformed multilateralism, a reference to expanding the UN Security Council to become more representative.

India slams Pak's 'falsehoods' and 'deceit' at UNGA

Press Trust of India

UNITED NATIONS

Describing Pakistan as a “puppet” regime, India criticised the country’s “falsehoods” and “deceit” at the United Nations (UN), warning that continued terrorism by Islamabad will have consequences.

India exercised its Right of Reply on Friday night, after Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif used the UN General Assembly (UNGA) podium to credit U.S. President Donald Trump for his “timely intervention” in the 2025 conflict with India, and again raised the Kashmir issue in his address to the world body.

Petal Gahlot, First Secretary in the Permanent Mission of India to the UN, said, “We heard some hypocritical homilies about democratic rights and human values from a regime whose capital at this very moment is being fortified against its own people.”

“We are confident that this Assembly will recognise Pakistan and its policies for what they really are; not what its represen-

J&K is an integral part of India and will always remain so, says First Secretary Petal Gahlot

tative mendaciously projects it to be. Reiterating falsehoods year after year does not make them true. Pakistan’s terrorism, deceit and duplicity will neither benefit it nor the world,” she said.

Criticising Mr. Sharif for raising the Kashmir issue, Ms. Gahlot said Jammu and Kashmir was an integral part of the country. “And will always remain so.”

Criticising Pakistan for its “long-standing practice” of cross-border terrorism, Ms. Gahlot said India had demonstrated last year that “terrorists will have nowhere to run, nowhere to hide.”

India had launched Operation Sindoor on May 7, 2025, targeting terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, in retaliation for the Pahalgam attack of April 22, 2025, which killed 26 civilians.

EC switches to damage control mode after facing flak over SIR

Poll body announces 'special drive' for enrolment of those left out during the SIR; additional declaration with Form 6 only for the SIR period, it says; decisions, coming days after reports of rift within EC, have 'approval of full commission', it notes

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) on Saturday announced a slew of measures addressing concerns over the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls across the country, including stopping physical hearings for unmapped voters or those with logical discrepancies in their enumeration forms.

It said that the declaration accompanying Form 6 (used for fresh voter registration) is mandatory only during the current SIR process. This in effect means that new voters who seek inclusion in electoral rolls after the ongoing SIR need not submit any such declaration.

The Election Commis-

Revised process

The EC, which held a meeting on Saturday, said that any person whose name has got left out during SIR or thereafter may apply to the ERO concerned for inclusion in the electoral rolls

KEY DECISIONS

- Election officers to immediately launch a special drive for enrolment of electors left out of rolls

- Declaration attached to Form 6 to be used only for SIR

- BLOs to visit houses of voters issued notice under SIR

- A panel with an independent expert from IIT/IIT to review ECINet platform

- Claims and objections period for SIR in Delhi and Maharashtra extended



CEC Gyanesh Kumar with Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi during a meeting in New Delhi on Saturday. ANI

sion also said that any person whose name has got left out during SIR or thereafter, and any person including young/ first-time voters, may apply to the electoral registration officer (ERO) concerned, for inclusion of their names in the electoral rolls.

A special drive will im-

mediately be launched for their enrolment, it said in a press note.

The SIR process has already been completed in 20 States and Union Territories.

The fresh initiatives of the poll body came after a meeting of the full bench of the commission on Sa-

turday afternoon and days after reports emerged of a rift within the Election Commissioners over these and other issues in the SIR process as well as the internal working of the EC.

'Complete approval'

The Election Commission's press note was pertinently

Congress urges top court to hold CEC accountable

NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday urged the Supreme Court to take *suo motu* cognisance of what it described as "illegal and unconstitutional" changes to the voter enrolment process under CEC Gyanesh Kumar while holding him accountable for the changes. » **PAGE 7**

accompanied by a photograph of all the three Election Commissioners and mentioned that it "has the approval of the full commission".

MORE TIME FOR CLAIMS

» **PAGE 7**

DISSENT IN THE COMMISSION

» **PAGE 13**

● KEY DECISIONS BY COMMISSION

CONCERNS ON ECINET: 'Centralisation of electoral rolls'; Officers backed by law not getting proper access to ERONet

🕒 **ECI:** A committee headed by Sr Deputy Election Commissioner and including an independent expert will review the ECINet

CONCERN ON 'LOGICAL DISCREPANCIES': ECI filing appeals against voters who were first flagged for 'logical discrepancies'

by it, but then included by judicial officers in the SIR.

🕒 **ECI:** BLOs will visit homes to collect documents from those issued notices during ongoing SIR for being unmapped and for logical discrepancies, and upload them on ECINet for decision by ERO

CONCERN ON 'ADDITION TO FORM 6': Additions to Form 6 linking new voter registration to SIR is 'illegal, unauthorised'. Cannot be

made unless govt amends rules.

🕒 **ECI:** For non-SIR period, the forms applicable as per Rules (the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960) will be used

CONCERNS ON issues such as conduct of meetings, permissions, directions by Commission

🕒 **ECI:** Agenda will be circulated in advance and minutes will be issued for all Commission meetings; all directions issued by the Commissioners to officers shall be complied with

RIISING POWER DEMAND TRIGGERS EMERGENCY MEASURES

Captive coal plants asked to run at full capacity from Oct 1

Pratyush Deep

New Delhi, September 26

AMID RISING power demand, the Centre on Friday invoked emergency mechanisms to issue directions to about 112 captive coal-fired power plants to operate at maximum capacity from October 1 till December 31.

The country is witnessing an unusual surge in electricity demand this September, with peak power demand nearing the level recorded during peak summer.

On September 10, the country's peak power demand touched 269 gigawatt (GW), the highest-ever peak demand recorded for the month. So far, the peak power demand for the year was 270 GW which was recorded during the peak summer in May.

A captive power plant is a dedicated power-generation facility which is built and operated by an industrial company or a group of factories primarily to supply electricity for their own use, rather than selling power to the public grid.

The direction has been issued under Section 11 of the Electricity Act, which allows the government to mandate power generation in extraordinary circumstances.

The directive is applicable to all coal-based captive power plants with 50 megawatt capacity and above which will be required to "operate and generate power to the maximum extent of their available capacity."

"The generators shall offer their available surplus generation, after meeting their own captive demand, through the power exchanges, in accordance



India is witnessing an unusual surge in electricity demand this September, nearing peak summer levels. REUTERS

with the applicable market regulations and procedures," it read.

The government said the move was aimed at maximising electricity availability. "Entire capacity of all the sources of generating electricity including the captive generating plants" needs to be utilised to the maximum possible extent, it said, asking the generators to maintain adequate coal stock to ensure availability of fuel for operation of the plant and enable maximum generation.

"The generators shall submit a weekly report to the Central Electricity Authority indicating generation, captive consumption and sale of power through the power exchanges/other permitted avenues, along with details of available capacity and coal stock, as may be prescribed," it added.

Separately, the power ministry also extended the same emergency mechanism to Tata Power's imported coal-based plant, Coastal Gujarat Power Ltd, till December 31.

Notably, the plant has been running under this provision since March, and it was slated to end this month.

Before March, the 4 GW capacity plant had remained largely idle for nearly six months due to high fuel costs and the absence of a viable power purchase arrangement. Earlier this year, the Gujarat government also gave approval of a revised power purchase arrangement with the plant, clearing the way for the resumption of long-term supply from the plant.

A senior government official said the emergency provision was extended only to Tata Power's plant, as other imported coal-based plants were operational and were not facing any challenges.

The invocation of the emergency provisions is not unprecedented. The government has invoked it in previous years during peak summer months to ensure adequate power supply.

FULL REPORT ON

WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

United Naga Council to lift road blockades in Manipur

The Hindu Bureau

GUWAHATI

The United Naga Council (UNC), the apex community organisation of Nagas, agreed to temporarily lift its economic blockade on Manipur's highways after a tripartite meeting with the Centre and the State government at the Border Security Force's Frontier Headquarters in Guwahati on Saturday.

The decision to pause the blockade after more than three months is seen as a significant step toward easing the transportation and supply crisis in Manipur since an ethnic conflict between the Kuki-Zomi and Meitei communities erupted in May 2023. The violence later shifted to one between the Kukis and Nagas.

UNC president Ng. Lorho told journalists that the discussion was connected with the prolonged economic blockade on Mani-



The highway blockades began in June, disrupting the movement of goods and affecting the supply of essentials in Manipur. FILE PHOTO

pur's lifelines. "We decided to lift the blockade temporarily from 6 p.m. on September 26 after the government said our demands would be addressed," he said.

The UNC's demands are the revocation of the Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement with about 25 Kuki-Zomi armed groups, the removal of Deputy Chief Minister Nemcha Kipgen, and justice for six Naga residents of the Kuki-dominated Kangpok-

pi district, who were abducted and killed in May.

The organisation said the government promised to maintain law and order in the State's vulnerable areas, especially along the international border.

The blockades began on June 11, disrupting the movement of goods and affecting the supply of essential items in Manipur. It followed the recovery of the dismembered bodies of the six Naga civilians on June 10.

Cong. questions probe into Ram Temple donation theft

Why have key Trust functionaries, including Champat Rai and Anil Mishra, been made witnesses, asks Jairam; he questions PM Modi's silence, seeks impartial investigation under SC's supervision

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday questioned the scope of the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probe into the alleged *chadhawa chori* (theft of devotees' offerings) at the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, asking why key functionaries responsible for the temple's management had not been named as accused in the case.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh also questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi's silence on the issue and asked him to respond.

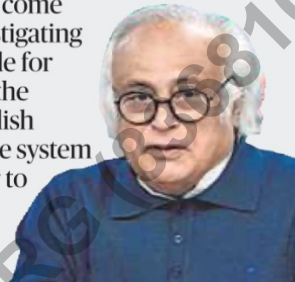
The Congress's communications chief questioned the 21-day delay between the reported recovery of ₹2.25 lakh from a bathroom on June 4 and the registration of a First Information Report on June 25. Mr. Ramesh sought an impartial investigation under the supervision of the Supreme Court.

In a post on social media



Can the full truth come out without investigating the role of those responsible for overseeing and managing the system?... Did the SIT establish accountability for the entire system, or did it confine the matter to just the minor players?

JAIRAM RAMESH
Congress general secretary



platform X, Mr. Ramesh said the charge sheet had recorded that a video of the cash recovery was sent to the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust general secretary Champat Rai on June 4, and that he was shown the CCTV footage on the following day.

"If the CCTV footage, recovery and identification of suspicious employees had already come to light, why was there such a delay in initiating criminal action?" Mr. Ramesh said.

The Congress leader also questioned why Mr. Rai, trustee Anil Mishra, and construction in-charge Gopal Rao had been made

witnesses rather than accused in the case.

According to Mr. Ramesh, the charge sheet records 105 instances of offerings being removed during the counting process. One accused was allegedly seen removing money on 85 occasions, he said.

"Can the full truth of the offering theft come out without investigating the role of those responsible for overseeing and managing the system?" Mr. Ramesh asked.

He also questioned the decision to restrict the case to eight accused despite the SIT examining CCTV footage, digital communi-

cations, and financial records.

"Did the SIT establish accountability for the entire system or did it confine the matter to just the minor players?" the Congress leader said.

The alleged theft concerned offerings made by devotees and the investigation should therefore establish responsibility beyond those directly accused of removing the cash, Mr. Ramesh said.

'Probe BJP, RSS links'

He also asked whether the investigation had examined any possible links to the senior leadership of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

"The case cannot be considered closed until the real responsibility for the theft of offerings made in the name of Lord Ram is fixed," Mr. Ramesh said, calling for an impartial and transparent investigation under the Supreme Court's supervision.

Trump rejects Iran's deal to reopen Strait of Hormuz

Reuters

WASHINGTON/UNITED
NATIONS/CAIRO

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Saturday he had rejected an Iranian proposal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz and end fighting in the West Asia.

Iran raised the initiative at the UN General Assembly in New York, saying it had been transmitted to the Americans via Qatari mediators and that it could reopen the strategic waterway and put an end to hostilities in the region within seven days.

But in comments to presspersons at the White House, Mr. Trump said: "I reject their proposal... I rejected their deal."

"They want to make a deal to open the Hormuz Strait immediately because they're losing so badly," he



Donald Trump

said before leaving for Tennessee. "We're winning tremendously."

"They want to make a deal and I think that's fine, I like making a deal too. What they want to do is immediately open the Hormuz Strait... because they have no money coming in, because they get their money from the Hormuz Strait," Mr. Trump said.

The U.S. has imposed an economic blockade on Iran to put pressure on Tehran

to lift its blockade of Hormuz, which has drastically reduced shipping through the strait, even though Mr. Trump again asserted that the U.S. had control of the waterway.

The *Wall Street Journal* first reported that Mr. Trump had rejected the Iranian proposal, citing unnamed U.S. officials.

It said Mr. Trump was privately sceptical that Iran would meet his demands and had told his staff that he sees a renewed bombing campaign as likely after the November U.S. mid-term elections to Congress.

Iranian President Ma-soud Pezeshkian, in an interview with the CBS show "Face the Nation", said Tehran was ready for talks on its nuclear programme and other issues, but would not accept "bullying or coercion".

China, US agree to \$30bn tariff cut, AI dialogue during Xi visit

Chinese Foreign Ministry: The two sides also agreed to set up trade council

Reuters

Shanghai, September 26

CHINA SAID on Saturday it had agreed with the US on a \$30 billion reciprocal tariff-reduction arrangement and on launching a dialogue on AI, under an eight-point consensus reached during President Xi Jinping's visit to Washington.

The two sides have also agreed to set up a trade council and extend the outcomes of earlier talks in Kuala Lumpur, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said.

The agreement follows an earlier move by world's two largest economies to extend by two months a trade truce that had been due to expire on November 10, allowing more time to work on a potentially bigger trade deal, US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said Wednesday.

The three-day summit between Xi and President Donald Trump, which ended on Friday, showcased personal diplomacy rather than big public breakthroughs. Xi has since landed in Beijing, Chinese news agency Xinhua reported Saturday.

"This historic visit enriched the constructive and stable China-US relationship, upheld the overall stability of bilateral ties, opened a new chapter in China-US relations, and will have a far-reaching impact on world peace and development," Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said in a statement.

On artificial intelligence, the two sides agreed to hold a dialogue on the technology's risks



US President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump with Chinese President Xi Jinping and his wife, Peng Liyuan, in the Red Room of the White House on Friday. REUTERS

Trump says he does not want to 'integrate' with China on AI

Washington: President Donald Trump said on Saturday that despite a "big talk" this week with Chinese President Xi Jinping on AI, the US should not join efforts with China on the technology.

"We had a big talk on SI," Trump told reporters at the White House, using his preferred name of super intelligence.

"What they want to do is stop our progress because we're lead-

ing China by a lot, and we're going to keep it that way. We didn't spend that much time talking about it," he added.

Trump said he did not want to "integrate" AI initiatives with China because of US dominance. "I would rather not integrate because we're leading by a lot," he said, adding: "When you're leading, you don't open it up to each other". REUTERS

and benefits, with the next round of discussions set for November, and to set up a communication channel for AI-related incidents, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said.

The ministry also said in a separate statement that Beijing valued Washington's use of the term "super intelligence" in place of "artificial intelligence".

The two sides also agreed to support each other in hosting Asia-Pacific Economic Cooper-

ation leaders' meeting and the Group of 20 summit, with both leaders planning to attend the gatherings hosted by the other.

On foreign policy, the leaders agreed that Iran should fulfil its commitment not to develop nuclear weapons, and that no country or entity should impose transit tolls on international waterways, the ministry said.

The US Embassy in Beijing did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment.

The Arctic race

U.S.-Greenland deal

Washington will establish two new military bases in the world's largest island as it seeks to expand its presence in the Arctic region and check Russian and Chinese influence

Stanly Johny

“Essentially, it’s a large real estate deal. A lot of things can be done,” U.S. President Donald Trump said in August 2019, during his first term, when asked whether the U.S. would be interested in acquiring Greenland. After he returned to office in January 2025, Mr. Trump repeated his threat. “We need Greenland for national security purposes,” he said in January 2025. You look outside. You have Chinese ships all over the place. You have Russian ships all over the place. We’re not letting that happen.”

Greenland, a Danish territory located between the Arctic Ocean and the North Atlantic Ocean, was home for at least 30 American military bases and installations during the Second World War. The island’s strategic profile grew in recent years after Russia and China stepped up their activities in the Arctic region, partly because of ice melting which opened up previously unpassable regions. Mr. Trump’s threats to take over the island incensed Denmark, a founding member of NATO, and America’s other European allies. The crisis further strained the transatlantic ties. But on September 22, on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, the leaders of the U.S., Denmark and Greenland



signed a new security agreement, which, according to Mr. Trump, would allow the U.S. “to do what is necessary in Greenland”.

The 1951 U.S.-Denmark security agreement provides Washington broad rights to build military bases in the ice-covered island. Most American bases on the island were shut down over the years, particularly after the Cold War. Now the U.S. stations some 150 troops at its Pituffik Space Base in Greenland. U.S. officials wanted to increase this military presence which they argued was important to monitor and defend the northern approaches of North America and North Atlantic at a time when the race to control the Arctic is heating up. Russia has extensive Arctic territory and military infrastructure. Greenland also possesses significant mineral resources, including rare earths, a segment which is currently dominated by China. U.S. officials have raised concerns about potential Chinese invest-

ments in Greenland. So Washington wants to compete with Russia in the Arctic and build new military infrastructure to monitor movement in the frozen waters and prevent Chinese influence in the region, besides making sure that America has access to the island’s mineral resources.

Terms of the deal

Denmark, which has already blocked Chinese investments in Greenland, had said it would allow Washington to expand its military presence on the island, but insisted that Danish sovereignty and Greenland’s self-governing rights be respected. The latest security agreement with the U.S. sought to address both America’s demands and Danish concerns.

According to the agreement, even if Greenland, which has a population of around 50,000, becomes independent, it would respect the deal with the U.S. and stay within NATO. In other words, this deal pro-

vides the U.S. indefinite access to the island’s military facilities. The deal, which reaffirms “the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Denmark” and recognises the “self determination of the people of Greenland”, also stipulates that no hostile power (non-NATO countries) can establish military facilities on the island or invest in its sensitive areas (mainly rare earths). The U.S. will be allowed to establish additional defence facilities in Narsarsuaq in the south, where it had an airfield during the Second World War, and in Mestersvig in the east. The Mestersvig facility would allow the U.S. to monitor the waters between the island and the Scandinavian region. Greenland would also be part of the U.S. Golden Dome anti-missile shield, and Danish authorities have pledged to work together with Washington to counter espionage in Greenland, a reference to alleged Chinese activities in the region.

On paper, Greenland would remain a self-governing territory of Denmark. But in practice, the U.S. would have indefinite rights to build military facilities on the island and a say in its economic policies and resource extraction. Mr. Trump may not have secured ownership of the world’s largest island, but he appears to have secured almost everything else.