

AFSPA extended for six more months in three districts of Assam

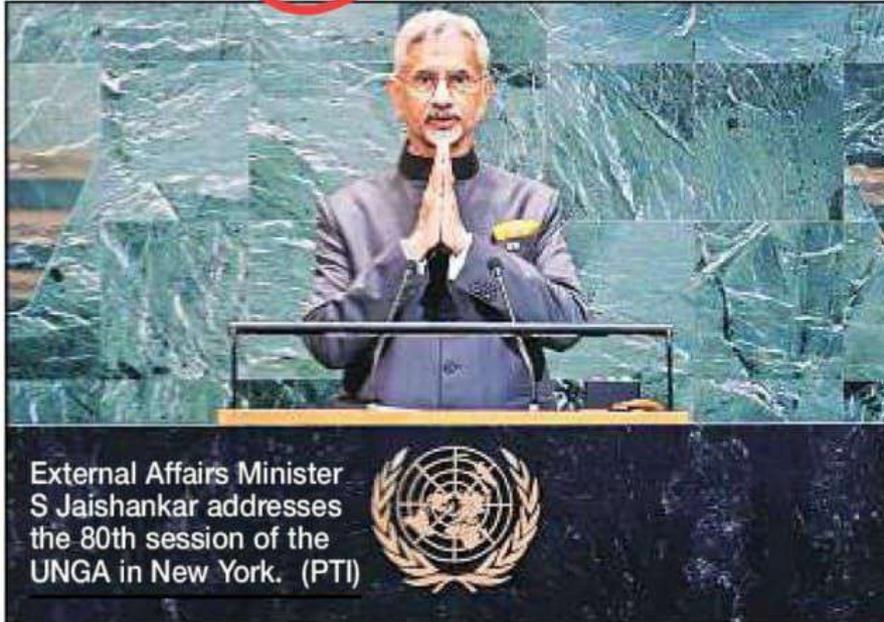
GUWAHATI, Sept 28 (PTI)

THE Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act or AFSPA was extended in three districts of Assam for six more months from October 1, according to a notification issued on Saturday.

The State Government had recommended to the Centre that the 'Disturbed Area' status under the AFSPA be extended in Tinsukia, Charaideo and Sivasagar districts for an additional period of six months, according to the notification issued by the state's Political (A) Department.

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs agreed with the State Government's view to retain the status in the three districts, and the extension was granted.

Bharat will always maintain its **FREEDOM OF CHOICE**: Jaishankar @ UN



UNITED NATIONS, Sept 28 (PTI)

BHARAT will always maintain its freedom of choice, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said, underlining that three key concepts of 'atmanirbharta', 'atmaraksha' and 'atmavishwas' guide India's approach in the contemporary world.

"Namaskar from the people of Bharat," Jaishankar said as he began his address to the General Debate at the 80th high-level session of the UN General Assembly on Saturday.

Addressing world leaders, he said Bharat approaches the contemporary world, guided by three key concepts of 'atmanirbharta' (self-reliance), 'atmaraksha' (self-defence) and 'atmavishwas' (self-confidence). 'Atmanirbharta' means developing "our own capabilities, building our own

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strengths and nurturing our own talent", the minister said.

"We see its results already, be it in manufacturing, in space programmes, in pharma production or in digital applications. Make, innovate and design in India also bene-

fit the world", he said.

On 'atmaraksha', Jaishankar said India remains determined

to protect its people and secure their interests, at home and

abroad. "That means zero tolerance for terrorism, robust defence of our borders, forging partnerships beyond and assisting our community abroad."

'Atmavishwas' entails that as the most populous nation, as a civilisational state and as a rapidly growing major economy, "we are confident about who we are

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Centre to launch 'Sabki Yojana, Sabka Vikas' campaign nationwide on Oct 2

NEW DELHI, Sept 28 (ANI)

THE Ministry of Panchayati Raj will roll out the People's Plan Campaign (PPC) 2025-26: "Sabki Yojana, Sabka Vikas" Abhiyaan across all States and Union Territories from 2nd October 2025, initiating the process for preparation of Panchayat Development Plans (PDPs) for the Financial Year 2026-27.

Ministry said that since its launch in 2018, the People's Plan Campaign has enabled Panchayats to prepare evidence-based, convergent and inclusive PDPs that reflect local priorities and align with national goals through Special Gram Sabha meetings. "This exercise deepens participatory planning and helps in further strengthening of grass-roots institutions across the country. As per the data available on the eGramSwaraj Portal, more than 18.13 lakh Panchayat Development Plans comprising

Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDPs), Block Panchayat Development Plans (BPDPs) and



District Panchayat Development Plans (DPDPs) have been uploaded since 2019-20, of which over 2.52 lakh Plans pertain to the ongoing exercise for 2025-26," an official release stated.

The People's Plan Campaign 2025-26 seeks to strengthen participatory, transparent and accountable local governance. Gram Sabhas will review previous GPDPs using digital platforms (eGramSwaraj, Meri

Panchayat App, Panchayat NIR-NAY), assess progress, address delays, and prioritize unfinished works with unspent Central Finance Commission grants, release stated.

Ministry said that planning will be guided by the PAI, ensure effective use of SabhaSaar, enhance OSR, and promote wider community participation. "Special focus will be on tribal empowerment under the Adi Karmayogi Abhiyaan, making Gram Sabhas decisive forums for inclusive development aligned with national goals."

With active involvement of Panchayat representatives, line Departments, community members and frontline staff, the Campaign is expected to further strengthen transparency, convergence and accountability in the planning process, paving the way for better service delivery and improved outcomes in rural areas.

₹355cr sale marks new high for Indian art mkt

Gaitonde's Work Sells For Record ₹67cr

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Vasudeo Gaitonde was a man who pursued perfection. He could spend months on a single canvas, only to destroy it if it failed his exacting standards. In his lifetime, his sublime abstractions—with their play of light and colour—were often overshadowed in a market enamoured of the decorative aesthetic of figurative art. Little could he have imagined that decades later, these same works would

command millions in the auction room.

On Saturday, a luminous yellow ochre canvas by the reclusive painter, who died in 2001, set a new world record for the artist at Saffronart's 25th anniversary sale in Delhi. The work sold for Rs 67.08 crore (\$7.6 million), not only eclipsing his previous benchmark of Rs 42 crore but also making him the second priciest artist in India.

The top slot still belongs to his fellow modernist M F Husain whose *Gram Yatra* sold for over Rs 100 crore earlier this year.

The sale itself set a new benchmark. With total proceeds of Rs 355.8 crore (\$40.2 million), it became the highest-value auction of South



A luminous yellow ochre canvas by the late reclusive painter set a new world record

Asian art worldwide—a resounding signal of the Indian market's resilience even

as global art sales waver. "Indians are now seeing generational value in Indian art," said Dinesh Vazirani, Saffronart's CEO. "For the wealthy, it's not just about diversification alongside real estate, equity, and gold. There's also social pressure—you can't have a big home and bad art."

Several other artists set new records that night. Tyeb Mehta's *Trussed Bull* (1956) fetched Rs 56 crore, eight times its upper estimate. Jehangir Sabavala's *The Anchorite* (1983) sold for Rs 16.8 crore while F N Souza's *Six Gentlemen of Our Times* (1955) brought in Rs 20 crore, a global auction record for a South Asian work on paper.

The evening also saw a breakthrough for contempo-

rary art. Nalini Malani's *Nursery Tales* sold for Rs 3.6 crore, underscoring how young collectors are increasingly drawn to politically and socially charged work. Malani, whose practice has long been unapologetically feminist and political, transforms the whimsy of nursery rhymes into allegories of violence and resistance.

Her presence in international museums is well established; now the auction house too is a stage where her narratives command attention. Her success at Saffronart signals that as prices for the modernists soar, buyers are turning to contemporary voices that better match both their pockets and their sensibilities.

UN arms embargo, other sanctions reimposed on Iran over its N-plans

Reuters

United Nations: The UN has reinstated an arms embargo and other sanctions on Iran over its nuclear programme following a process triggered by European powers that Tehran has warned will be met with a harsh response.

Britain, France and Germany initiated the return of sanctions on Iran at the UN Security Council over accusations it had violated a 2015 deal that aimed to stop it developing a nuclear bomb. Iran denies seeking nuclear weapons. The end of the decade-long nuclear deal originally agreed by Iran, Britain, Germany, France, the US, Russia and China is likely to exacerbate tensions in West Asia, just months after Israel and the US bombed Iranian nuclear sites.

UN sanctions imposed by the Security Council in resolutions adopted between 2006 and 2010 were reinstated at 8pm EDT on Saturday (0000 GMT on Sunday). Attempts to delay the return of all sanctions on Iran failed on the sidelines of the annual gathering of world leaders at the UN this week.

"We urge Iran and all states to abide fully by these resolutions," the foreign ministers of France, Britain and Germany said in a joint statement after the deadline passed. EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas confirmed in a statement Sunday that the bloc would "now proceed to implement the reimposition of all previously lifted UN and EU nuclear-related sanctions without delay".

Israel hailed the reimposi-



Iranian parliament members hold a meeting in Tehran on Sunday

Iran denounces move as 'unjustifiable'

Iran on Sunday condemned as "unjustifiable" the reinstatement of UN sanctions over its nuclear programme. "The reactivation of annulled resolutions is legally baseless and unjustifiable... all countries must refrain from recognising this illegal situation," the Iranian foreign ministry said in a statement. "The Islamic Republic of Iran will firmly defend its national rights and interests, and any action aimed at undermining the rights and interests of its people will face a firm and appropriate response," it added. Russia made clear it would not enforce sanctions, considering them invalid. AFP

tion of sanctions on its arch foe as a "major development", citing what it called Tehran's ongoing violations over the nuclear programme. "The goal is clear: prevent a nuclear-armed Iran. The world must use every tool to achieve this goal," the Israeli foreign ministry said in a post on X.

The Iranian rial plummeted to a record low against the US dollar on Sunday, according to currency-tracking websites. On the black market, the rial was trading at around 1.12 million rials against the dollar, the Bonbast and Alan-Chand websites reported, abo-

ut a month after it had been slightly above one million rials to the greenback.

With the return of UN sanctions, Iran will again be subjected to an arms embargo and a ban on all uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities, as well as any activity related to ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons. Other sanctions to be reimposed include a travel ban on dozens of Iranian citizens, asset freezes on dozens of people and entities and a ban on the supply of anything that could be used in the nation's nuclear programme. REUTERS

India's strained ties with US won't hit our relations: Russia

Lauds New Delhi For Not Buckling Under Pressure

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov said there's no threat to India-Russia economic partnership from the strain in India-US ties and complimented India for showing "self-respect" by not buckling under external pressure in securing its energy interests.

Speaking after a meeting with his counterpart S Jaishankar on the margins of the UNGA, he said Russia fully respects India's national interests and the "independent foreign policy" that PM Narendra Modi is pursuing, while also stressing India and Russia share a "particularly privileged strategic partnership".

"These situations that might arise between India and the US or India and any other country, I can't consider them a criteria for relations



Jaishankar and Lavrov on the sidelines of UNGA in New York Saturday

between India and Russia," he said addressing the media.

"We have full respect for the national interests of India, full respect for the foreign policy (PM) Narendra Modi is carrying out to promote these national interests," added the minister, who is expected to visit India ahead of the India-Russia annual summit in Dec.

Lavrov was responding to questions on India's continued imports of Russian oil despite pressure from the US.

"There is no threat to this relationship. And, if somebody does do something of that nature, the Indian PM, minister of foreign affairs, have sa-

id it loud and clear, India chooses its own partners," he said.

Lavrov quoted Jaishankar as saying "if the US wants to sell its oil to us, we are prepared to discuss the terms for this, but what we buy from other countries, not the US, but from Russia or other countries, that's our business, and that has nothing to do with the Indian-US agenda".

"That is a very worthy response," he said, adding that it shows that India, like Turkiye, has "self-respect".

Lavrov also said Russian President Vladimir Putin is likely to visit India in Dec for the annual summit. "We have

a very extensive bilateral agenda — trade, military, technical cooperation, finance, humanitarian matters, healthcare, high tech, AI — and of course, close coordination at the international level, within the SCO, Brics and bilaterally," he said. Lavrov also spoke about bilateral visits and regular exchanges between him and Jaishankar.

"I'm not even asking what is going to happen to our trade relations or oil? I don't ask our Indian colleagues this. They are perfectly capable of making these decisions for themselves," he said.

To another question, Lavrov stressed ties between Russia and India is secure. "If the US has proposals on how to enrich bilateral trade between the US and India, they are prepared to discuss the terms for that, whatever terms the US might put forth," he said. "But when it comes to trade, investment, economic, military, technological and other relations between India and third states, it is something India will discuss only with those states in question," he added.